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EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

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HAPPY DAYS WERE HERE AGAIN

The NRA parade of September 13, 1933, passing General Hugh S. Johnson and Mayor John P. O'Brien in the reviewing stand. Keystone photo.

Flights of Fancy

PYLON. By William Faulkner. New York: Smith & Haas. 1935. $2.50.

Reviewed by BEN RAY REDMAN

IF Jiggs hadn't collected the parachute fellow's money, and spent it all on a pair of new boots, then Roger and Laverne and the parachute fellow and Jiggs himself would have been able to pay for a room that night, so they wouldn't have gone with the reporter to his place, which means that the reporter wouldn't have helped Roger to wangle a new plane for the last race, and Roger wouldn't have been killed just when he was. So perhaps Mr. Faulkner is justified in beginning his story with an elaborate description of Jiggs's negotiations for the boots. Not that Mr. Faulkner seeks to justify himself by such an argument, or any other. For the moment, at least, Mr. Faulkner occupies a literary position that makes explanations superfluous.

You see—to employ the method by which the average reader seeks to outline a plot (and in some ways it's a good method, because it isn't solemn and it has the virtue of simplicity)—there was this city that Mr. Faulkner calls New Valois, when it's pretty obvious that he means New Orleans, and there was this Mardi Gras going on, with these air races and other stunts out at the new aerodrome, all for cash prizes, as part of the celebration; and there was this particular outfit, as you might call it, that was entered in these races and so forth. There was Roger Shumann, who was the pilot, and the parachute fellow who did his jumps for twenty-five bucks apiece, and Laverne, and the kid, and the mechanic. Roger and Laverne were married, but the parachute fellow was living with her too, and they didn't know which one was the kid's father. They'd shaken dice to see who should marry Laverne when the kid was born. Jiggs, you see, was just the mechanic. Well, this reporter, whose name I can't tell you because the author doesn't tell it, was sent out by a New Valois paper to cover these races, and he ran into this funny set-up—that is, the two men living with the one woman and having the one child between them—and it fascinated him. At least that's what Faulkner says, and what the reporter says too, but it's clear that he was fascinated more by La-

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Pioneer Explorers of Earth's Hottest Spot

HELL-HOLE OF CREATION. By L. M. Nesbitt. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1935. $3.75.

Reviewed by ELLSWORTH HUNTINGTON

THE thrill of the pioneer explorer is equalled only by that of the discoverer of new truth. Before the World War I wished that I had lived in the days of Columbus when the whole New World lay open to the explorer. Since the war I have felt that today is the most interesting time of all history, but "Hell-Hole of Creation" for a few pleasant hours has swung me back to the old feeling. Perhaps this is due to the author's quiet, modest, but extremely picturesque way of telling his tale; perhaps to a sort of nostalgia for the days when I, too, bobbed back and forth on a camel and had to let the animals go waterless for seven days. No one who has tasted the trials and joys of exploration can fail to read wistfully of experiences like those of Mr. Nesbitt.

Here we have an explorer who has encountered a temperature of 168°F. He endured the heat until he was as faint and dizzy as the climber 20,000 feet above the sea; he travelled through thorny forests until his clothes were almost torn from his back. This same man was almost lost in floods and mud, he traversed leagues of volcanic rocks so sharp that pieces of skin and flesh were gouged from the legs, arms, and even bodies of every man and animal in the caravan as they fell on the rough stones. He had the patience of Job, for he listened politely for days in all that heat to savages who a hundred times rehearsed the same reasons for preventing him from going forward. In the end, with the cunning of Mephistopheles or some more worthy person, he brought a seemingly hopeless three-day parley to a conclusion in his way and saved his party from death. In one case he persuaded a naked old chief that the Ethiopian "King of Kings" had sent to him—the savage—a special letter commending to his care the white man with his marvellous guns, tents, and innumerable magical books. And with all this Mr. Nesbitt discovered new lakes and valcanoes, saw one of the earth's really

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Caveat to the General

A Review of General Johnson's "Blue Eagle from Egg to Earth"

BY JOHN T. FLYNN

GENERAL JOHNSON had an opportunity to make an important and enormously interesting contribution to contemporary history. But he has passed up that opportunity because, writing in haste for a red-hot market, he plunged into his book* without blueprints or specifications for the project. The fiery protagonist of a planned economy has become the author of an unplanned book which, like his economic planning, suffers grievously from this lack of plan.

The title justifies the impression that this history will trace for the reader the career of General Johnson's famous bird from its very egg. But it goes back into history far beyond the egg—which you soon perceive is General Johnson himself—to certain primordial Johnsonian roosters who arrived upon these shores in 1812. Macaulay observed that history has a way of beginning as a novel and ending as an essay. The General's book begins with 150 pages of memoir and ends with 300 pages of polemic. The memoir is much the better part because, being the General's story of his boyhood and youth, it is of no importance whether it is true or not. And while it is far from being a good memoir there is plenty there to reveal that the General might have made an excellent job of it had he permitted himself the time.

The style in which the story is written is worthy of more than passing notice. It is interesting to observe how newspaper men have commented on the General's crackling style and advertised it as something new and novel in expression. The simple truth is that the General's style is a combination of two now almost extinct methods in expression. One of these belonged to the old-fashioned newspaper editorial writer in the days when newsprint was cheap and space unimportant, and when the old scribbler enjoyed the luxurious pleasure of just rattling along without any concern whatever for the number of words consumed in the process. The other ingredient is derived from the manner of the congressional orator of the eighties who counted among his most priceless assets that store of classical allusions which he depended upon to give a savour of literary excellence and learning to his speeches. Johnson's manner is the downright manner. There is a thump on the desk with every sentence. He puts down the throttle with the first paragraph, leans on the whistle cord, and thunders away at full steam to the last paragraph. Meantime he loses no opportunity to throw into the racing sentences the rich erudition mined out of "One Thousand Useful Quotations" and the "Writers' Book of Facts." It is a bit trying at times in long addresses. It is quite wearing in a long book. It is the more to be lamented because the author is capable of writing better English.

The Blue Eagle portion of the book is disappointing because it reveals so little. The General, save for a few sketchily recounted incidents, tells little that any journalist might not have gotten together out of the newspaper reports. There must have been many incidents, many bitter quarrels, many clashes of opinion, many developments which would throw an interesting and interpretive light upon the swiftly moving episodes of that singular and troublous comedy-drama of the NRA. There are men who, like General Johnson, look upon it as a holy thing. There are those who believe it to be one of the most sinister forces ever introduced into our society. The verdict must rest upon the facts. The General has not given us any facts we did not already have. He has given us instead endless chapters of argument about it—a kind of rehashing of all the superheated and flamboyant oratorical dialectics showered on the country in his speeches at the time.

It is a perfectly proper reply that, with the President still in office, with so many of the actors in the drama still attached to the General, with tempers still taut and hatreds still smouldering, the time for revealing all this inside stuff is not yet arrived. But if this is true, then the time for writing this book had not arrived. Unless, of course, you are prepared to say the time to write a book is when there is an editor on the wire eager to pay well for the manuscript.

But if the General has told little that is new about the Blue Eagle, he has revealed much that is interesting about himself.

He is one of those beings who inhabit a little world of his own. The thoughts which scamper through his mind, the men he works and plays with, their dreams, the schemes they discuss for remodeling the world—these he imagines are the originating and controlling forces which influence the processes of the universe. This little world is highly colored, energetically dramatized, and wholly pleasing to the General. That there is outside it another great world of reality, where other men are thinking the same things, discussing the same plans and have been for years, does not, apparently, interest the General. The men in his little cosmos he looks upon as paragons of goodness and wisdom. Those outside he regards as unknown and suspicious, though he is willing, when they enter his circle, to accept them quickly enough, knight them as philosophers and saints, and call them by their

* *THE BLUE EAGLE FROM EGG TO EARTH. By General Hugh S. Johnson. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co.* 1935. $3.

This Week

NOT QUITE SOCIAL
By ROBERT FROST

FATHERLAND
By CARL BILLINGER
Reviewed by Samuel A. Nock

STRANGE DESTINY: A BIOGRAPHY OF WARREN HASTINGS
By A. MERVYN DAVIES
Reviewed by Stanley Pargellis

THE END OF ILLUSION
By HOMER SMITH
Reviewed by Alvah C. Bessie

GREEN LIGHT
By LLOYD C. DOUGLAS
Reviewed by Bernard de Voto

THE BOWLING GREEN
By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

Next Week

SPRING BOOK NUMBER

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first names. Thus he speaks of George Peek as one of the great figures in our national life and Donald Richberg before he met him as an unknown because he had never heard of him. He looks upon Alexander Sachs, a Wall Street investment trust economist, as a great mind, but he speaks of Dr. O. M. W. Sprague of Harvard, a leading American economist with a world-wide reputation, as an upstart and an unknown.

This strange illusion helps to explain two things which crop out continually in this book. One is the harshness, savagery, even brutality which marks his collisions with the outlanders of this world of his and the tolerance, warmth, amiability, and sentimentality which he showers upon his own. It is a primitive characteristic. It is responsible for almost all of that astounding series of maladroit attacks which accumulated upon the unhappy General's head the wrath which drove him out of the NRA and brought his eagle to the earth.

AT EIGHT

The other thing which arises out of this little-world illusion is the belief he reveals throughout the book that he has been responsible for at least the germs of almost every important public policy these last twenty years. A man may be very seldom a hero to his valet, but he is very often a considerable hero to his autobiographer.

As a young lieutenant in San Francisco, doing salvage work after the fire, he thought it would be an excellent thing to build decent tenements in the suburbs with subsistence gardens about them. Nothing came of it, of course. But this Johnson declares to have been the fore- [illegible] he German agronomes and the [illegible] housing program of today. He [illegible] s, for he comes back to it many times with evident pride. That there were in a dozen countries many social reformers who had devoted their lives to the subject, that it had been studied here, that many experiments in housing had been made, seems never to have occurred to the General.

He insists that the germ of NRA—that is, the germ of the notion of self-rule in industry—originated with some proposals of his own and some speeches of "Bernie" in the twenties and thirties. This makes you gasp a little. The intense, highly organized movements to modify the Sherman anti-trust laws, to permit industries and trade associations to unite for self-rule, and the actual attempts made to put this into effect through agreements, through open price competition, through trade associations by numerous groups during the last twenty-five years, count for nothing. All this happened in the Big World, not in the Little World, and the General ignores it.

He tells how he wrote a pamphlet with George Peek urging foreign dumping of American grain and a tax on farmers to spread the loss, renting excess acres, destroying crops, etc. This he insists was the forerunner of the McNary-Haugen bill and of all subsequent farm legislation. The innumerable farm economists and publicists who advocated all these things for years before Johnson ever heard of them are wiped out of the picture with a stroke of the pen.

He claims to have written a speech for Woodrow Wilson and one of his best speeches at that. He tells how he prepared a speech for Al Smith which Al delivered in Omaha after which he walked away with the West in his vest pocket, until Senator Borah came along and picked Al's pockets. He wrote a speech for Jack Garner, who was being baited for his silence in 1932. Johnson admits the speech was a "dandy" and that after "Jack" delivered it, no one ever baited him again. He ghosted the report of the Transportation Committee made up of Coo-

AT SEVENTEEN

lidge, Al Smith, and others. And this report, too, he informs us, may be read for the germs of practically all the transportation policies advocated since. There is little doubt that the General believes he originated all this.

Because the General imagines himself as the father of all these great ideas, he naturally resents criticism of them. He even resents other men wandering over the subjects at all which have been thus definitely settled. This accounts, undoubtedly, for his method in debate. His first labor in an argument is to hunt for a juicy word to call his adversary. Moreover he always has a very poor opinion of his adversary. In an early chapter he tells how when he was a boy his mother opened her kitchen door one day to find her small son surrounded by other boys and announcing in high tones that "Everybody here is a rink-stink except Hughie Johnson." The General likes that story and tells it with relish. It remains as his invariable technique in argument. He confesses that a time arrived when he found himself balked by Madam Secretary Perkins. She disagreed with him. But, he observes, "the Secretary is a woman, and I don't know anything at all about how to handle that kind of a disagreement." Obviously he could not lean against the wall, tell Madam Secretary she was a termite, and then shout in adult phrases: "Everybody here is a rink-stink except Hughie." So he left the field disarmed.

AT THIRTY-FOUR

Three stages in the evolution of General Johnson

The profound wisdom and the absolute correctness of all his ideas and solutions the General never questions. Some mistakes he concedes—but even these he has a way of admitting in something of the tone of God who "did repent him that he did make man," as, for instance, when he confesses that he should never have named an Advisory Council, or never consented to the appointment of Clarence Darrow. Above all, he confesses to a sort of divine error when he admits that he did repent him that he did ever make Richberg.

On one point of first importance—the account of the origin of the NRA—the General gives an incredible and grotesque record. What is more, he is a good deal less than frank. For instance, he mentions not a word that in his second draft at least he included a proposal for a ten per cent sales tax. He tells how he and one of his extraordinary minds, after "exhaustive researches," worked out all the details of NRA. Into it he put Title II providing for public works and low-cost housing. All this was in a page and a half. Then he learned that others were fooling around with the idea, and he joined forces with them and soon took over the whole job—he and Sachs and Richberg. As a matter of fact, the Wagner group had been working on the act before Johnson had given it a thought. Title II was Title I in that act. It was written before Johnson arrived on the scene. So were the labor provisions. Johnson's draft had in it literally nothing but a grant of power to the President, nothing about public works and nothing about labor. He was interested in one thing—it was his great scheme for ending the depression—that was to get prices up, permit employers to unite for controlling production and prices. He has said himself that the chief object of NRA was to get prices up. There were no exhaustive researches. He was recruited by Raymond Moley to draft an act, and he had it all ready in a few days. Johnson's account of the origin of the NRA is the slowly ripening fruit of hindsight with what may be called the creative memory. Yet the author's mind is so constructed that it is possible to put his wishes, his emotions, his hatreds, his friendships all together and produce a memoir of anything that interests him which will fit his purposes and completely satisfy his conscience. I have not the slightest doubt that he believes these yarns thoroughly.

The book confirms me in a notion I have long cherished, that there is a place open for some conscientious chronicler who will devote himself to rescuing from the memories of the actors in contemporary events the facts about those events. These actors write their autobiographies often enough. But alas, if history is a conspiracy against the truth, what shall we say of autobiography? Written, as in this case, by a man whose mind is still hot with a sense of his wrongs, who looks upon himself as a frustrated archangel, stewing with hatred one minute, dissolving in tears the next, aglow with love the next, the autobiographer may be counted on to tell less than half of any story, to leave out great sections of it, to misplace the emphasis, and to give the rest in colors and outlines appropriate to his own fame. The historian searching for the truth amid the pages of autobiography must look between the lines.

* *

John T. Flynn, currently appearing before the Senate with a plan for elimination of war profits, is the author of "Investment Trusts Gone Wrong!", "God's Gold," and "Graft in Business."

Communism and the German Outlook

FATHERLAND. By Karl Billinger. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1935. $2.50.

Reviewed by SAMUEL A. NOCK

I WAS in Germany during and after the "purge" of June 30, 1934. The days following the wholesale murders were full of whispered conversations. We spoke of acquaintances who had been done away with, of the bodies of old and dear friends which had been discovered mutilated and shot here and there, of friends who had simply vanished from the face of the earth. After a day or two of this sort of thing, all we could do when we heard that another friend was gone, was to shrug our shoulders. To defend our own sanity, our minds had set up a superficial indifference to horror and grief; but we do not cease to live in the hatred of the bestiality that we experienced.

So one who reads "Fatherland" must set up a superficial attitude of indifference to what he reads if he is not to lose all sanity. Like the Social-Democrat Seger, whose "A Nation Terrorized" Billinger's book confirms ten times over, this author gives the reader more horror than he can assimilate. Like Seger, Billinger tells of sadistic orgies in prison and concentration camp that completely numb the imagination; such scenes could hardly be conjured up in the least wholesome mind. They must have occurred. And the fact that they doubtless did and do occur is enough to make any honorable reader hate National Socialism his whole life long.

But Billinger, the young and enthusiastic communist, does not stop, as did Seger, with an account of the atrocities in the concentration camps. He goes on to show a Germany in which there is nothing left but "infections of unutterable sadness, infections of incalculable madness, infections of incurable despair."

According to Billinger, there is no hope left for the old Germany, the Germany of Seger and the Social-Democrats; there is no hope for the Germany that existed before them. There is only one hope, and that is the hope of the communists. They alone, says Billinger, have a faith which enables them to look on what is occurring in Germany today as a mere phase of life to be passed through; they and they alone dare to go on with their work, to organize, to make propaganda, to enlist converts among the workers. Like many of his comrades, Billinger, after going through the double hell of prison and concentration camp, has gone back to his work of advancing the communist cause. Fear of death and fear of torment that makes any death welcome cannot deter him and the others like him from carrying on.

Below the surface in Germany discontent is increasing, communism is gaining adherents, the proletariat is stirring. For a long time, probably, the workers can do nothing; but they have faith. The fact that only the communists have faith and courage necessary to survive the present pestilence of violence and mayhem and murder ensures the ultimate victory of communism in Germany. This is Billinger's belief: and he states his belief so reasonably that one wonders whether any way other than communism is possible in Germany. And for most of us, this increasing power of communism in Germany is no less a matter for clear and cold thinking than is the ugliness of National Socialism.

Not Quite Social

By ROBERT FROST

SOME of you will be glad I did what I did,
And the rest won't want to punish me too severely
For finding a thing to do that though not forbid
Yet wasn't enjoined and wasn't expected clearly.

To punish me over cruelly wouldn't be right
For merely giving you once more gentle proof
That the city's hold on a man is no more tight
Than when its walls rose higher than any roof.

You may taunt me with not being able to flee the earth.
You have me there, but loosely as I would be held.
The way of understanding is partly mirth.
I would not be taken as ever having rebelled.

And anyone is free to condemn me to death—
If he leaves it to nature to carry out the sentence.
I shall will to the common stock of air my breath
And pay a death-tax of fairly polite repentance.

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The Verdict for Hastings

STRANGE DESTINY: A BIOGRAPHY OF WARREN HASTINGS. By A. Mervyn Davies. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1935. $5.

Reviewed by STANLEY PARGELLIS

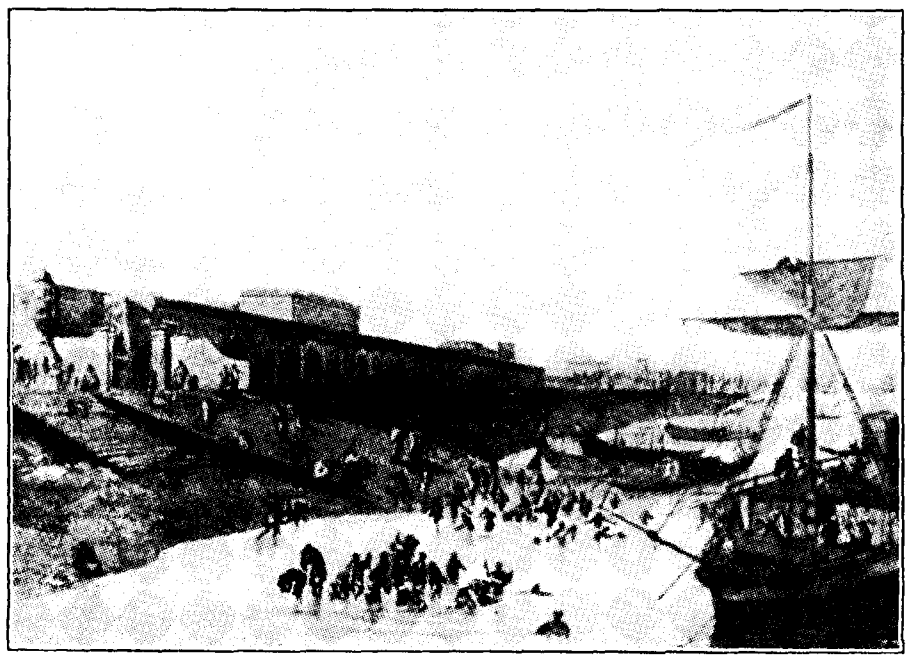
ENGLAND has not since the Middle Ages offered much scope to constructive political genius. She has preferred to alter the fabric of her society by a succession of patches, laid on where the cloth is threadbare, stitched by parliamentary committees and royal commissions. Not for her is the Bismarck or Lenin who tailors a complete new wardrobe, and genius of that sort she seldom produces and more seldom recognizes. Least of all in the eighteenth century could her governing class lift to power a constructive statesman who might have saved America and spared later miseries. It was altogether in keeping with the art of politics as Walpole and Lord North knew it that the greatest governing mind of the century should live unacknowledged and unrewarded. Warren Hastings belongs among the select company of great administrators. His achievement in Bengal ranks with Napoleon's reconstruction in France, but where Napoleon reorganized institutions for his own people whom he knew, Hastings as a foreigner built for India a system of landholding, justice, finance, and trade, and devised a foreign policy that was imperial without being annexationist. He saw that however God-given and perfect English customs might be, none of them, not even the worship of the God who gave them, should be imposed on the Bengalese. He saw that a stable empire does not rest on profits alone, and that abstract theories of natural law cannot supply the place of practical statesmanship. He wrought without supporters and in the face of constant opposition. None of the wealth of native courts stuck to his hands. He was something of a poet and a scholar, and he regarded men as essentially good. Some of these things England might have forgiven, but the combination was too strong for the age of the nabobs to stomach. Hastings was punished. A seven-year impeachment trial exposed him to the utmost savagery and vituperation which the oratory of Burke, Fox, and Sheridan could invent.

Mr. Davies writes with passionate admiration for his subject a brief for the defence. His prologue pictures the opening day of the trial, and through the four hundred pages which present Hastings's quarter of a century in India the reader is never allowed to forget for long that evidence is being marshalled to condemn the prosecution. It is well and imaginatively done. To draw briefly and clearly the complicated factors in that career—crown, parliament, John company, native states and rulers in a land employing different values than Europe knew—required and got from Mr. Davies superlative skill in perhaps the greatest of historical and biographical arts, that of organization. The mosaic of Indian life and administration becomes as lucid as most readers will want. No one can doubt, when he reaches the scene in Westminster Hall, that Hastings was guiltless and his accusers either venomous or deceived. Perhaps there is no other way to write the biography of Warren Hastings; he fought misunderstanding all his life, and never more magnificently than before the House of Lords. Most of his critics were little men, at a time when nearly everyone in public life suspected the worst of his neighbors. Even Philip Francis, the remorseless pursuer of Hastings for twenty years, was a little man, a malignant and unscrupulous yellow journalist who dinned into official ears what they were accustomed to hear. And as surely in politics as in literature, do the ideas of little men reflect the systems, the conventions of an age. Mr. Davies knows this; he has long mulled over topics in the reign of George III. Yet he descends into the arena as champion, lays on personal blow for blow, till we begin to fancy that none of Hastings's opponents held opinions honestly, or had the shadow of a case, or was free from some defect or other in character. Hastings fought that way only when there was no other. Something might be said for writing, not of a great man wronged, but of a great man.

The reader of this book, which deals with the first attempt of Englishmen to rule a non-European country, will lay it down wondering about the century and a half which was to come. Suppose Hastings's policies and outlook had been faithfully kept, would India have been spared the seizure of Sind, the Mutiny, the white man's law and his burden? It is hard for an American to believe that they could have been kept. Hastings himself sometimes blundered, as Mr. Davies shows, and his successors, once embarked on the road of negotiation with jealous native states, Russia looming in the future, could scarcely have left in doubtful hands strategic posts they might easily take. Governors-general, no less than soldiers, are by virtue of their training and position imperialists.

This book is worthy of high praise: it is not the book its title implies. Strachey may have invented the modern biography, but never the modern pseudo-descriptive title. It is high time that publishers realize that monstrous titles are coming to mean monstrous books. Mr. Davies's book is by no means monstrous; quite the contrary. It deserves to be known by two words instead of seven.

Stanley Pargellis is a member of the department of history at Yale University.



OLD FORT WILLIAM, CALCUTTA, FROM THE RIVER HUGLI, 1788
Aquatint by Thomas Daniell, R.A., from "Strange Destiny."

Earth's Hottest Spot

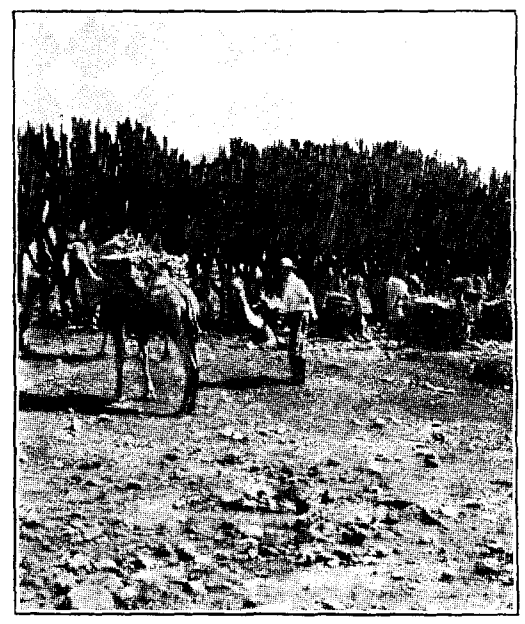
(*Continued from first page*)

unique places, and came back to tell the tale.

But where did all this happen? In Danakil, a section of northern Ethiopia, or Abyssinia if you prefer the other name, only two hundred miles or so from the spot where Ethiopia and Italy are now squabbling. The place does not look exciting on the map. Map-makers possess much imagination and love finished products. Therefore, on most maps, Danakil looks quite innocent and well known. But this strip, extending 350 miles from north to south just west of French Somaliland and the narrow southern part of Italian Eritrea, was not explored until Mr. Nesbitt traversed it in 1928. It had been crossed from east to west, but three previous expeditions, all Italian, that tried to traverse it longitudinally were failures. Their members were murdered by the savage Danakils.

As a story of man's dependence on geographical environment few things excel this delightfully written and really thrilling tale of adventure in the hottest place on earth. Leaving Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, at a height of ten thousand feet, Mr. Nesbitt and two Italian companions went down the Awash River until they finally reached a great depression some 380 feet below sea level. This is well called the "Hell-Hole of Creation," for it must be the hottest place on earth. One begins to realize that Danakil is warm when temperatures of 138° are recorded, but only when 157° in the open air and 146° within a cave are mentioned does one feel thoroughly hot. After that even the comfortable reader begins to roast, for the thermometer keeps on rising to 167°. Day after day there was no water at all for the beasts and only a most niggardy supply in the goat skins for the men.

In beauty of style, in freedom from any trace of personal exploitation, and in vividness of description "Hell-Hole of Creation" ranks among the finest books of travel. Nevertheless, it has one serious defect. The experiences of each day are clear, but the experiences of the whole journey are not so distinct. Few aside from the skilled geographer will realize why this hollow in the earth's crust is the hottest place on earth, or what is its relation to Abyssinia and Eritrea. The facts, to be sure, are there, but nowhere are they summed up. There ought to be sections explaining that this depression is part of the same long, narrow Rift Valley, or depressed slice of the earth's crust in which lie the Dead Sea and Orontes Valley fifteen hundred or two thousand miles to the north and Lake Nyasa equally far to the south. The fields of fresh lava—ropy, rounded, or rough—which made such trouble for Nesbitt's camels, are characteristic of the whole of this long rift. Volcanoes, like the three new active ones which he discovered, have divided the rift into many distinct compartments. Again and again the Rift Valley sinks to low levels, and there one finds salt lakes and vast beds of salt where lakes have dried up. These are of the same type as the three or four new lakes discovered by Mr. Nesbitt. Equally arresting, but equally undeveloped, are the interesting facts as to the human relationships of Danakil. Just as Abyssinia, by reason of being the highest and most inaccessible plateau of Africa, has maintained its independence and now tempts Italy by its fertility, so Danakil, by reason of its lowness and dryness and consequent inaccessibility, has remained independent of Abyssinia. We wish not only that these broader relationships had been set forth in Mr. Nesbitt's clear, engaging style, but that he had told us how his temperature observations were taken, how hot the nights were, and how it feels to drink water which must, we infer, have had a temperature higher than that of a hot bath. But it is ungrateful to criticize a book which has given the reviewer the keenest pleasure, and which is sure to rank high among books of travel.



SALT CARAVAN AT ERIFIBLE
From "Hell-Hole of Creation."

Tragedy in the Tropics

THE END OF ILLUSION. By Homer W. Smith. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1935. $2.50.

Reviewed by ALVAH C. BESSIE

TWO purely fortuitous elements will tend to obscure whatever virtues Mr. Smith's second novel may possess in its own right. First: he has taken Somerset Maugham's milieu for his own—the Malay archipelago; second: he has chosen a situation that might easily be dear to Maugham's heart. The parallel goes even further than this, for like Maugham (in this novel at least), he attacks his situation from a somewhat philosophical bias and like Maugham he writes a facile, ingratiating prose that carries the reader along with the story, with practically no effort on the reader's part at all.

But where the author of the innumerable tales set in the sultry Eastern tropics displays at moments an insight that is penetrating if not profound, Mr. Smith does the best he can with sincerity of purpose and honesty of observation; where Maugham delights constantly with his malicious wit, Mr. Smith is grim and utterly humorless; where Maugham can endear his most unlikable characters to the reader and make them live in his memory, Mr. Smith has not been able to move his audience to sympathetic understanding or any profound involvement with the people he has chosen to portray. He has watched them carefully, he has made considerable effort to understand them, and there is little doubt that he does understand them. But his integrity of purpose and earnestness of conviction cannot take the place of a talent that the elder writer displays even in his slightest performances.

By profession, Mr. Smith is a scientist, by inclination a novelist, and he has made a commendable effort to carry over into the field of the novel the impartial observation and the clue-hunting that is part of his scientific equipment. Hence he examines the situation at Kuala Lapan with an objectivity that, applied by a richer talent, would have produced a fine story. Into the weird ménage of Work, the engineer, Lena, his mistress, and Doctor MacBride comes Kerlow, the detached observer who provides still another parallel with the works of Somerset Maugham. He is made privy to a moral problem that is troubling the righteous Doctor MacBride; in brief, MacBride suspects the engineer of the murder of his former assistant, who has come to his death in a fashion the doctor considers mysterious. Kerlow finds himself increasingly involved in a situation he had no desire to meddle in.

Slowly, painstakingly, Mr. Smith lays this situation bare, and he is at his best when he expounds the growing confusion of his indirect commentator, Kerlow. But when he tackles the situation himself and brings his quartet of characters to act upon one another, his weakness as a novelist is revealed in turn, with the result that the moral struggle of Doctor MacBride, which might easily have been valid and moving, moves the reader not at all, and he is left with the impression that the author has elaborately set up a situation and a group of characters, then neatly knocked them down again. Work's suicide, in view of his established character, seems totally out of focus; Lena's reaction to the death of her lover is static and unconvicing; the puritanical doctor is left to wander hopelessly in the jungle; Kerlow alone emerges from the tangle with a trite philosophical abstraction to comfort him.

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The Saturday Review
of LITERATURE

HENRY SEIDEL CANBY.....*Editor*
NOBLE A. CATHCART.....*Publisher*
AMY LOVEMAN.....*Associate Editor*
GEORGE STEVENS....*Managing Editor*
WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT, CHRISTOPHER MORLEY } *Contributing Editors*

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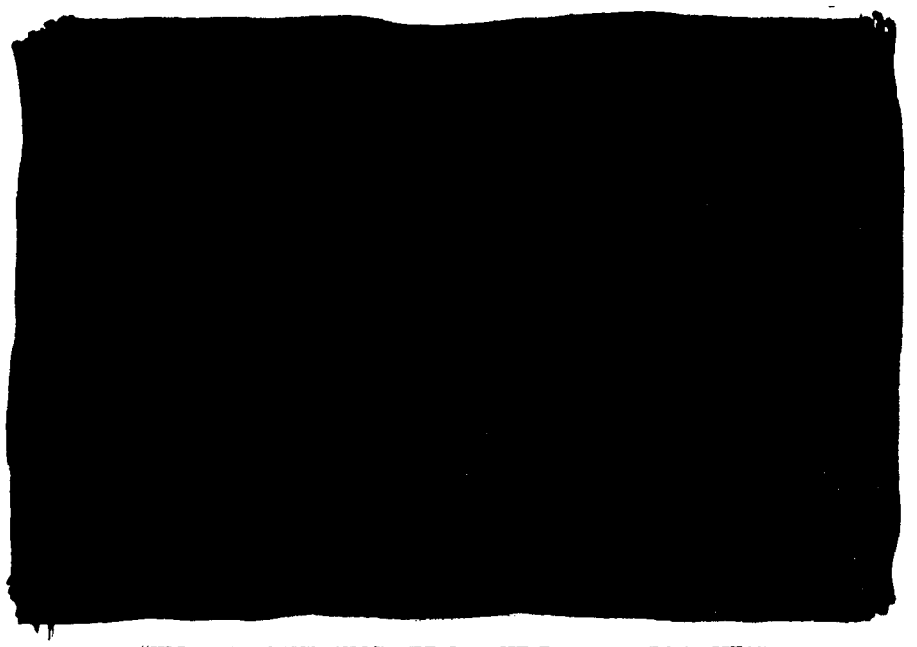
Influential Books

Any list of "the best books" inevitably starts a controversy. Let one list be printed—the hundred best books of all time, or ten books for a desert island—and correspondents will rush in with their own alternative selections. Such, however, has not been the case with the three lists of "The Twenty-Five Most Influential Books Published Since 1885," compiled by John Dewey, Charles A. Beard, and Edward Weeks, and printed in the April issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*. For these lists, "including books which have influenced both thought and action," have been assembled by eminent specialists, without the criterion of personal preference which would invite a democratic society of readers to enter into a choosing game. Nor is it our intention to try to go Messrs. Dewey, Beard, and Weeks one better. These lists raise a question even more interesting than any involved in the specific titles chosen; they start a whole train of thought about the kind of influence books can have on life.

The *Atlantic* lists include, on the whole, books of unquestioned importance: books which have opened up new fields of thought, like Marx's "Das Kapital," which heads all three of the lists; books which have presented new discoveries in science and research, like "The Golden Bough," Niels Bohr's "Atomic Theory and the Description of Nature," Turner's "Frontier in American History." Books of purely literary importance are not neglected: Proust and Joyce are present, and even Henry James. What is most striking about these lists is that all the books mentioned, with one exception, are books which have had a *good* influence: at least an influence for which, from the intellectual or the literary point of view, there is much to be said. (The exception is Adolf Hitler's "My Battle," which appears twenty-fifth on Professor Beard's list.)

We wonder whether this may possibly be taken to indicate an over-optimistic attitude as to the influence of books. Is it altogether realistic to include, as two of the lists do, "All Quiet on the Western Front," which has certainly not yet stopped any armament races, and to omit "Over the Top," which signally assisted in selling the last war to America? Does "The Golden Bowl"—the literary influence of which is unquestionable—belong on a list that fails to mention "Pollyanna," "Freckles," "The Shepherd of the Hills," and the scores of other popular novels which have supported the rationalizations and the wish-fulfilments of millions? The fact that these books did not outlive their periods makes no difference—as Mr. De Voto points out on another page of this issue, a Harold Bell Wright can come back, with all essentials unaltered, in a Lloyd C. Douglas. And what shall we say of D. H. Lawrence, whose influence has been intense if not objectively perceptible, who has contributed an original richness and confusion to the inner life of his generation?

The point seems to be that books can exert all sorts of influences, and not all of them are socially desirable. Once upon a time "The Sorrows of Werther" contributed to the suicide statistics. And for every book which, in our own day, opens up a new field of thought, there is at least one other which will keep its hundred thousand readers anesthetized, a little longer, against reality.



"WELL, PROUST WORKED IN THE DARK, DIDN'T HE?"
Cartoon by Lloyd.

Letters to the Editor: *Timely Books and Rental Libraries*

A Plan for Book Borrowing

SIR:—I thought I had shaken the dust of the so-called "circulating libraries" off of my feet permanently after the "Smart Set Anthology" rescued me from the puerile purlieus of retail bookselling; and "How to Run a Rental Library" had rid my shoulders of an accumulated mass of knowledge. But your editorial in the issue of March 9th has aroused old ghosts, and I have to write you about it.

In the first place (and a silly quibble it is, too,) by all laws of technicality, common sense, truthfulness, and systematization, circulating libraries are rental libraries. The reason for this is that dozens of public libraries are circulating libraries; in fact I expect all of them are save a few exclusive and dull reference collections. Rental libraries is the shorter, more truthful, and more accepted name. After which I shall make my plea, which is the body of this message.

The cruel part of your editorial resides in the little phrase toward its end: "Why not . . . let them get the timely book in the month of its publication . . .?" If you only knew the heartaches and misery that most rental libraries suffer just because of that misguided notion of a rental library's function, you would, I hope, have avoided the statement! Because it is utterly misguided.

An active rental library membership of five hundred people will require, during the first two weeks after publication of a book by, say, Sinclair Lewis, or some equal light in the literary firmament, two hundred fifty to three hundred fifty separate readings of this book. The average reading period will be about five days. In two weeks a copy can be read (at an extremely bold estimate) three times—a bold estimate because of the fact that sometimes three days are wasted while a library member is being notified of the fact that the book she reserved is being held for her. Averaging the requests for such a book at three hundred, and the number of readings in two weeks at three, the obvious result is a call for one hundred copies of the book in that period. If everybody in the library reads the book (and at least two hundred will not) it means five rentals per copy. The average income per rental is less than 25 cents—about twenty-one and one half cents, except for those institutions which still cling to the twenty-five cents a week rate. The net income on a copy of the novel will then be about $1.15. The book costs the library in actual cash between $1.50 and $1.75.

And people wonder why the rental library is such a poorly run and inefficient business! It cannot afford to be otherwise. The above outline of events for a Sinclair Lewis book is typical though at the same time exaggerated. It is not so much the fact that Americans all want to read the best seller at the same time that bothers the rental trade, however, as the fact that they refuse to pay fairly for the privilege.

The solution to the problem is one which I am afraid will never be adopted in this supposedly democratic nation: and that is the use of two classes of library membership, preferred and regular. England is the country from which this plan comes; but after having spent six precious months out of my life trying to interest people in the establishing of an English type library in this country, I fear the system will never become a part of America's book business.

By paying, on a yearly basis, twice the amount (sometimes still more) of the regular membership, eager readers in England can have the book they want the day they want it. That *never* happens in this country; and I think it is not a necessary feature of such a plan. But for such extra fee, the subscriber should get the book he wants within three days. The yearly rates in England amount to about $15.00, or a little more than 4 cents a day, for which the reader can have out one book at a time, exchangeable as often as he wishes—three times a day, if he can read that fast.

But the regular membership—about $8.00 a year, 2 cents a day—permits the subscriber to take out books on exactly the same basis with the exception that he cannot reserve or request special books. A small point it may seem—but as it works out, it means that never, in the larger libraries, does the reader of the second class get a book of any popularity till it has been out *four to six weeks*. And this is to the present writer a necessary and excellent plan. Make the impatient, rather blatant, and sheep-like reader of best-sellers-according-to-reviews-and-to-the-fashion, pay for the privilege. Let the good reader, the serious reader, the reader who really doesn't care about fashions in reading, but who wants something good to read, pay much less, and stand the delay.

Unless libraries can be organized in this country with memberships of over five thousand active participants, there will never be the attainment of your expressed ideal of everyone's reading the good books within the month of publication. It cannot happen. With such memberships, it is probable that under either the English system, or the American (so long as the rates do not decrease the average income per rental below the basic minimum of twenty cents) good service can be given the customer, and a tiny little bit of profit may be made by the proprietor.

Now that I have that off my chest, I hope the subject of rental libraries never comes up again!

GROFF CONKLIN.
University of Chicago Press,
Chicago, Ill.

Catch Your Reader

SIR:—I have just read your editorial on circulating libraries in last week's issue. And I quite agree with you that it would be fine, if the lending libraries could supply their readers with the kind of books you mention. Perhaps you remember the old recipe for cooking a hare, which began—"First catch your hare."

My experience has been that in order to circulate good non-fiction books, or even distinguished fiction, you must first catch your reader. And, believe me, they are hard to catch with anything except detective stories, light novels, *and* sexy things. Of course, when some book appears, which "everybody is talking about" ("Anthony Adverse," for instance), even the quality of it will not prevent rental library patrons from *asking* for it. Whether they *read* it or not is another question. But as a general rule, you simply cannot rent anything except light fiction, detective and mystery stories leading.

When I came back to —— after an absence of a good many years, and opened the small rental library that I am struggling to operate, I had "Vision," with a tolerably large V. Not that I expected to teach people what to read—far from it! But I did want to make *my* library different from most rental libraries. To begin with, I like good books myself, and I thought how nice it would be to read things I wanted to read, and then rent them out to other intelligent people. And again, I was sure that my plan would attract the very best people in town, as I am close enough to the center of things to be handy for everybody. And I am here all day (open from 9:30 A. M. to 9 P. M., and will exchange books on Sunday, if necessary). And I wanted to send books into the rural communities, too, after they had served their turn on the library shelves in town. They are needed in the country districts, I assure you. Oh, yes, I had *plans!* I immediately subscribed for *The Saturday Review* (used to be a charter subscriber, but had to drop it for some years), also the New York Sunday *Times, Publishers' Weekly, Retail Bookseller,* and other magazines and periodicals, bought a small set of reference books, and took other steps to start an out-of-the-ordinary rental library. I advertised (newspaper and direct by mail), and started with about 100 volumes, fiction, non-fiction, some classics, a few books that I had owned for a long time, and held on to because of their real worth. Well—let's see what has happened.

I've been open nearly six months. I have, in that length of time, sent out three or four non-fiction books, and these were wished on to people who took my word for it. Not one reader has asked for a non-fiction book. They all say "I want a *new* book." And regardless of what it is, just so it is new, light, *and* fiction they take it. My last order to McClurg was "for some *NEW*, light, *very* light, love stories, a couple of NEW Westerns," and so on. Must be NEW and must be LIGHT!

No, kind sir! We, the librarians of the rental libraries, are not to blame for the kind of trash our trade reads. Personally, I am getting fed up, because I can't buy the things *I* want to read. I have to read the things my customers make me buy! So what? . . .

So, if you know of anybody who would like to start the kind of rental library you speak of (which is the same kind *I* "visualized" in my innocence), let me know, please, and I'll apply for a job helping to run it!

A CIRCULATING LIBRARIAN.

The Saturday Review recommends

This Group of Current Books:

PROVENCE: FROM MINSTRELS TO THE MACHINE. By FORD MADOX FORD. *Lippincott.* Glimpses of French life and countryside by an adopted son.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JOHN HAYS HAMMOND. *Farrar & Rinehart.* The chronicle of a varied and colorful career.

DEATH IN THE AIR. By AGATHA CHRISTIE. *Dodd, Mead.* A Hercule Poirot detective story.

This Less Recent Book:

THE POEMS OF ROBERT FROST. *Holt.* Some of the most distinguished contemporary American poetry.

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Flights of Fancy

(*Continued from first page*)

verne than by anything else. He had another explanation of course: it was just some quality in them, and the life they led, that attracted him. He tried to explain to his editor.

> Because they aint human like us; they couldn't turn those pylons like they do if they had human blood and senses and they wouldn't want to or dare to if they just had human brains. Burn them like this one tonight and they dont even holler in the fire; crash one and it aint even blood when you haul him out: it's cylinder oil the same as in the crankcase. . . . They aint human, you see. No ties; no place where you were born and have to go back to it now and then even if it's just only to hate the damn place good and comfortable for a day or two. From coast to coast and Canada in summer and Mexico in winter, with one suitcase and the same canopener because three can live on one canopener as easy as one or twelve.

Anyway, the reporter attaches himself to these people, and fusses around them, and gives them a place to sleep, and then helps Shumann get that ship that he kills himself in on the last day of the races. And the reporter's pretty queer himself, if it comes to that. As another newspaperman says about him: "He dont have to move very far to go nuts in the first place and so he dont have so far to come back." And the whole story is about these flying people and the reporter. But it's more about the way this reporter sees them than anything else.

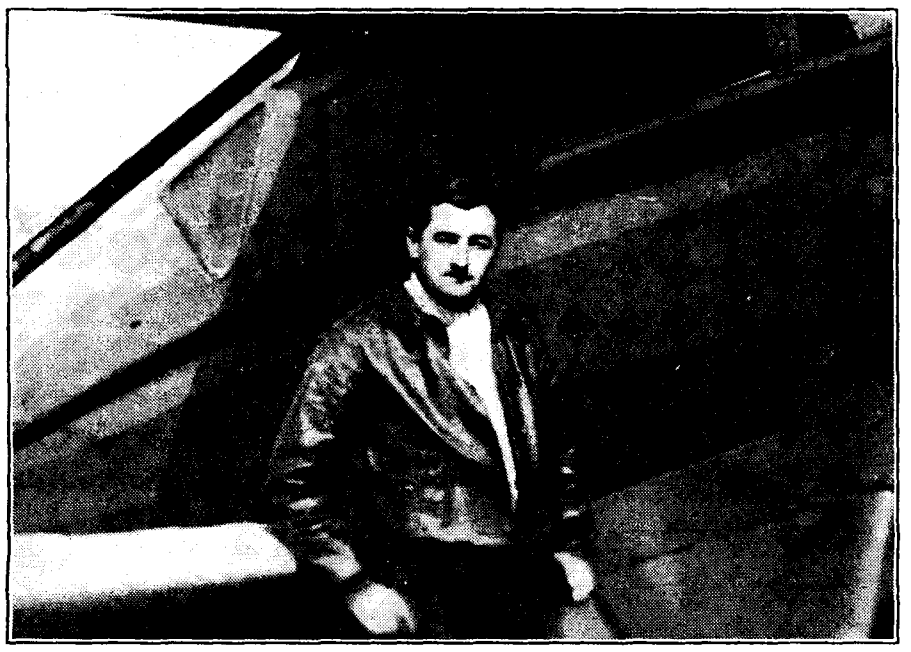
So much for the synopsis, as it might be presented by an ingenuous reader. The reader may take the novel, or leave it, as he pleases; but the less fortunate reviewer must face certain questions. Is Mr. Faulkner, in such books as this one, writing powerful, or merely sensational, fiction? Is he truly representing and interpreting life, or distorting it through the medium of a temperament so warped and peculiar that the distortions are not simply valueless, but also repellent, to those temperaments that we are generally agreed in designating, roughly, as normal? Are his characters genuinely observed, understood, felt, and re-created; or are they fantastic fabrications, the originals of which are to be found neither on land nor sea? Are not Mr. Faulkner's devices—his oblique approach, his ellipses, his scrambled time sequences, his pretentious descriptions, his tricky use of light and shadow, illuminating this part of the narrative and darkening that—designed to make the reader believe that his material is more complex and more important, subtler in nature and harder to get at, than it really is? Does he not purposely make things a little difficult for the reader, so that the reader will value excessively whatever rewards he may gather after surmounting the difficulty?

Perhaps the form in which I have cast these questions has already indicated what my own answers are. Briefly, they are all unfavorable to Mr. Faulkner. And the sum of them is that Mr. Faulkner is a mannered, tricky, extremely clever, and talented sensationalist. But I am perfectly willing to believe that he is entirely sincere, and that he could be nothing else. In any case, it is only his performance that comes to judgment.

The characters of "Pylon" are typical of the specimens that Mr. Faulkner makes up out of his admittedly unusual head. Clothing them in what might be called a cloak of romance worn inside out, the author tells us through the reporter that "they aint human." Which is quite true. They are not. But what are they, then? Symbols of the will to live, to continue, to reproduce—of the life urge, reduced to its lowest terms? Symbols of mankind lashed to the machine, in unholy wedlock? I shall not presume to say. But if they are meant to be either the one or the other, or anything else symbolical, it is a mistake to make them the focal points of a factual narrative otherwise designed to carry a conviction of reality. And what do we actually get to know of these characters? The author at least promises us knowledge, for, from the moment of the reporter's first excitement, it is the promise that lures us on; and in the art of come-on Mr. Faulkner need yield the palm to no detective story writer. But when we reach out our hand for these people there is almost nothing there. Shumann is simply a pilot; Laverne is a woman; the parachute jumper is a jumper and nothing more; and Jiggs is a little "horse of a man," obsessed by a new pair of boots. As for the relationship between the two men and the woman, of which so much is made, that promised a genuinely interesting psychological and emotional study, it is never penetrated, never explained, never developed. We reach out our hand—and what we touch is only an immensely clever and pretentious auctorial hocus-pocus calculated to conceal the emptiness at the heart of the narrative.

Mr. Faulkner is bothered neither by improbability nor impossibility in the conduct of his story. The scheme by which the reporter and Shumann obtain the new racing plane flouts probability outrageously. But connoisseurs of the impossible—and particularly those who have themselves piloted two-seater, open cockpit planes, with the joystick between their legs and their feet on the rudder-bar—should cast their eyes on the incident so Faulkneresquely described on pages 194-196. Not only does it rank as the neatest trick of the year, or any year, but it is good for as much laughter as your ribs will stand. Perhaps this is symbolism again; if so, it is so mucked up with detailed realism that it fails to come off—and it fails with a large, ridiculous bang.

In passing, and parting, Mr. Faukner's passion for compounding words should be noted. Whatever the influence that has moved him to this activity, whether it be Joyce or the Germans, he goes in for it in a big way. Almost every page is sprinkled with such typographical beauties as "lyingin," "martialcolored," "alreadyparked," "distancesoftened," "newspaperwrapped," "machinesymmetry," and with such eye-stopping phrases as "regalcolored cattle-chute." A street sign, announcing that the street is closed to traffic, is felicitously described as an "outwardfacing cheese-clothlettered interdiction." Here is one more annoying and meaningless affectation that must be borne upon the shoulders of Mr. Faulkner's manifest talent.



WILLIAM FAULKNER BESIDE HIS PLANE AT THE MEMPHIS AIRPORT

Streamline Version of Harold Bell Wright

GREEN LIGHT. By Lloyd C. Douglas. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1935. $2.50.

Reviewed by BERNARD DE VOTO

A SUMMARY of the Reverend Dr. Douglas's new novel will indicate its classification. In a city never quite identified as Chicago a crippled clergyman named Dean Harcourt mends shattered lives by discovering to their possessors their own Personal Adequacy and bringing them into knowledge of the Irresistible Onward Drive of God's purpose. (Hence the symbolic title: the road is clear before you—Go Forward.) The dean is a mighty preacher and so sways multitudes, but also he is a mystical psychoanalyst, a priest in the consulting room, and thus exercises his inspiration on individuals. Persons who come in contact with him are never again quite the same. Once a patient of his has heard the

LLOYD C. DOUGLAS
Photo by Blank & Stoller.

message, he has thereafter a harmonious personality, makes a success in his career, and achieves a happy marriage—except Sonia Duquesne, who has committed adultery and has to be content with becoming the dean's secretary. Several minor couples are conducted to God-consciousness and the marriage bed, but both the dean and his message are focussed on Newell Paige and Phyllis Dexter. Paige is the most brilliant young surgeon anywhere. He is about to succeed to the place of the most brilliant older surgeon, whom he loves and idolizes, Dr. Bruce Endicott. (Note the influence of Mrs. Southworth in the characters' names.) A patient whom Dr. Paige is treating has received Dean Harcourt's message and seems to the doctor the most inspiring woman he has ever known. But alas, on the day when Dr. Endicott is to operate on her, the bottom falls out of the stock market and so he botches the job. The patient dies, Dr. Paige accepts the responsibility for his chief's mistake, Dr. Endicott permits him to, and he begins to wander over the earth, disenchanted, very bitter, his life a ruin. Being a great soul, he can't help doing good here and there, but he is still Hamlet when he drops in on Dean Harcourt. In the dean's office he meets the daughter of the dead woman, and though they love greatly they misunderstand. Paige therefore wanders some more and the dean has to locate him in a laboratory where deckle-edge scientists are risking their lives with Rocky Mountain spotted fever before he can make his message clear. Even so a setter bitch is killed and she has carried some of the most touching scenes in the book. Dr. Endicott repents and everyone, including the adulteress, is saved.

It would be absurd to call this sort of thing bilge. It belongs to one of the oldest traditions of literature, the mystically therapeutic. Its equivalent is always with us and always serves an important end. Dr. Douglas is, briefly, a Harold Bell Wright—a streamlined Wright with knee-action wheels and chased silver dials on the cowl, to be sure, but with the identifiable engine under the hood. His milieu has changed from the desert to the metropolis, he deals with the maladjusted rather than the impure of heart, fear and frustration rather than lust and dishonesty are his monsters, but he tells us exactly what Mr. Wright used to tell us and he employs exactly the same technique. He tells us: one increasing purpose runs. He tells us: let not your hearts be troubled. He tells us no more—but do not be disdainful. He tells us what Mary Baker Eddy and Ralph Waldo Trine told us—or, if you like, what Emerson and Whitman told us. Or Woodrow Wilson. Or Karl Marx.

Millions want to be told just that. This audience combines wish-fulfilment with its spiritual sustenance, and it is Dr. Douglas's audience. He gives them what they need and desperately desire: assurance. In a time of economic chaos, it is comforting to be told that the Long Parade is moving onward in God's plan. In a time of disaster, it is comforting to be told that one is being Dragged Up. It is always comforting to frightened, weary, and discouraged men, to be told that they are the masters of their fate, that they have a spiritual power which will bring them through, that they have the Kingdom of Heaven with them, that the God-spirit of which they are a part has given them unused and even unguessed capacities for heroism and eventual success. It is comforting and, when told in terms of metrical and crepuscular vagueness, it is convincing. Thoughts so noble, so impalpable, so incapable of precise statement, must be true.

Comfort is what his readers ask of Dr. Douglas and comfort is what they get. His books would not sell by the carload—as at least "The Magnificent Obsession" did, which had the same message—unless his public found what they were looking for. It is a legitimate literary quest. He works with the humbler symbols of art, but they are eternal symbols. Their success on the lower levels of literature, in the sub-basements where yearning and exhortation and incantation dictate their form, requires no explanation. Does "Molly-Make-Believe" need to be explained? Or "St. Elmo"? Or "Tempest and Sunshine"? Or "If Winter Comes"?

Convulsing Idiocy

MASTER SANGUINE. By Ivor Brown. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1935. $2.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

THIS book can be recommended as diverting, rather obviously in the manner of "Candide." The story of the education—not of a Henry Adams—but of a young Englishman who believed everything he was told successively explodes a good many hypocrisies and kicks the pants of modern thought in a wholly pleasing manner. Master Sanguine is first educated in freedom, which he finds beset with pitfalls, and in the hearty tradition of English sport which also brings him to grief. He proceeds through Chastity College at Oxford, and after graduation moves in the higher realms of peculation, an excellent apprenticeship for which he has already served at school. He encounters the plague of vari-colored shirts that now oppresses Europe. In a nudist colony he runs into his old master, Dr. Junck-Vorwärts, again, who tells him that the price of nuts has risen sharply of late.

Meanwhile in the innocent following of what has been preached to him about sex in modern novels, our hero has encountered certain bewildering incidents. In the Kingdom of Cerulea, he is captured by the Green Shirts along with other nudists. He is finally won over to the splendid and sacred cause of Viridia, the country of the famous Stincka song. Other adventures ensue, until, in the chapter upon the Feast of Love the book reaches its hilarious height. It is all stuff and nonsense on the surface, and packed with delicious flings against most modern tendencies. The book is dedicated to that other highly humorous Scot, A. G. MacDonell. The style of it should be highly commended for its suavity, readability, and occasional convulsing idiocy. Mr. Brown commands an innocent urbanity that packs a considerable satirical wallop. In England he adorns the staff of the London *Observer*, and is known here for his "I Commit to the Flames."

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The Bowling Green

FRIGHTENED TO DEATH

IN Mr. P. P. Howe's edition of Hazlitt's *The Plain Speaker*, in the Everyman series, there is an obscure little note which has often delighted me. Hazlitt in the famous essay "On the Conversation of Authors" (which every writer should read if he is ever tempted to get pleased with himself) refers to "the musical small-coal man." Mr. Howe's note explains that this was "Thomas Britton, a dealer in small coal and a collector of every musical book he could meet with. He was frightened to death by a ventriloquist."

Frightened to death by a ventriloquist . . . how many intellects perish exactly so, daily, in politics, economics, theology, even in literary criticism. You can chose your own private list of gutgarglers who do the frightening.

It is even arguable that a similar phenomenon is happening in European diplomacy at this moment. The surest way to help start a War is to get all lathered up about Germany's frank rupture of an impossible treaty. What Germany needs (and needs badly) is a little soothing, a little kidding, a little admiration. A little don't-blame-you-a-bit talk; a little pretending that the other nations are pleased that her parity of argument will make War less possible. I don't believe that Hitler (who has seen the front line for himself) wants fighting. I believe he can be kidded. (Everyone can). I believe that if all the newspapers would print, as large as their War-Scare streamers, inspired display heads to the effect that Germany's frankness makes trouble *less* likely; and that other nations admire her courage and ingenuity, it would magically clear the air.

Hitler is a serious problem, but he can be outsmarted. Please, you editors and diplomats, don't give him a chance to sell to the German people the idea that all the other nations are playing Ring-Around-a-Nazi.

Men are such contrarious idiots; when you see them playing the goat, calmly pretending to praise them for it sometimes very oddly wearies them of their absurdity. The most dangerous thing is to let them build up an oppression complex.

The whole world is in such a state that it needs to be taffied and soft-soaped, not galvanized with any more jitters. The newspapers can do it best. Up to now President Roosevelt's silence is the best thing that's been said.

Before you abolish me with contradictions spend a little time thinking about the present situation from Hitler's point of view. You can't outsmart anyone unless you've somehow got inside his psychology. Sir John Simon and Captain Anthony Eden are clever enough to cool things off. . . . Let's hope that as Hitler expounds his views to the Lord Privy Seal it will be "the voice that breathed o'er Eden."

I am reminded, I don't quite know why, of the Caliph A. Edward Newton's story which Mr. E. V. Lucas is fond of quoting. A disillusioned old Frenchman was asked how his sons were getting along.

"Fine," he said. "My first son is a diplomat, and the second is also a lunatic. My third son is a banker and my fourth is also in jail. My fifth son got the Croix de Guerre and the sixth didn't go to War either."

THE READER

"And I can read her like a book
He narrowed his eyes' confiding look
While I all but answered, "Yes indeed—
Here is the rule by which you read:
Preface and title-page detest;
Follow a bit and leave the rest;
Skip notes, parentheses unminding,
Tear the marge and crack the binding.
Then lay the book down on its face
Never again to find your place."

ROBERTA TEALE SWARTZ.

GENESIS OF A BOOKPLATE

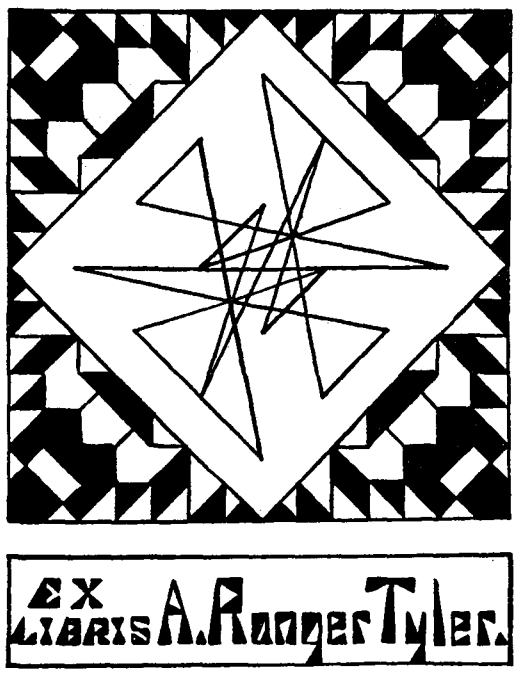
SIR:—A bookplate different from the norm of such literary embellishment was my object. I sought something that did not have the usual ships, monks poring over illuminated initials, ranks of books, or pen and inkpot rampant. At the same time, I was after something that could have significance, at least to me, and would not be too far-fetched to be reasonable.

Being of scientific turn of mind, I decided a figure based on numbers was in order. Magic is one of the fascinating manifestations of the past and, in a way, led eventually to science. The combination of these two seemed available in an Arabian magic square of four. This is the central figure, therefore, of my bookplate.

It is born of the following square:

1	15	14	4
12	6	7	9
8	10	11	5
13	3	2	16

Added vertically, horizontally or diagonally, the totals are always 34. Tracing a line, starting with one and going consecutively to 16, results in the figure seen in the center of the bookplate.



Thus there is order out of apparent disorder and the symbolism of magic conveys the ever new wonders prepared for our enjoyment in books.

The surrounding conventionalized sunburst is largely decorative, and the lettering attempts to carry out the feeling of the border, emphasizing the triangle which structurally can not go askew and implies, if one is numerologically inclined, the figure three. Incidentally, a then official of William Edwin Rudge, who handled the manufacture of the plate, complimented me on the general design but labeled the lettering "lousy," and this was back in 1927. Other purists in type faces have expressed themselves similarly.

This is the genesis of a bookplate.

Albany, N. Y. A. RANGER TYLER.

Another long-valued correspondent, whose letter I have had to postpone since last December, wrote from Nebraska during a snow-storm:—

SIR:—I have put in an afternoon mulling over two late issues of the dear old *Sat. Review,* and Isabel Paterson's *Golden Vanity;* going thru a catalogue that Frank Hollings sent me from London, and one of firsts from Scribners. Scribners have always labored under the delusion that I am a millionaire, not a post office clerk, for I bought an *Outward Bound* edition of R. K. of 'em, back in 1909. I asks you, why try to bait me with the offer of Christina Rossetti's *Verses,* London: privately printed, 1847, at one hundred dollars; or Virginia Woolf's *Kew Gardens* from The Hogarth Press, at half that amount. Now if they had Hunt's *A Jar of Honey From Mt. Hybla* at six bits, or F. Marion Crawford's *With the Immortals* at four. . . . Well, anyhow, I have got, by gosh, a first of T. S. E.'s *Waste Land,* no less, which they list at $22.50; that and a first of *My Antonia,* and a first of the redoubtable Hank Mencken's *The Philosophy of Nietzsche,* and a first of O. Henry's *Heart of the West.* These comprise my sole claim to literary sagacity.

You said you had bought one of Arthur Machen's books while going down a favorite shabby street in N. Y. C. Also that it was a first edition. I have been speculating ever since as to whether it was *Hieroglyphics* or *The Hill of Dreams* or *The Secret Glory.* Why isn't he more widely known? Carl Van Vechten put me on his trail with some remarks in *Excavations.*

It is a fascinating subject for endless and (probably) aimless speculation, this quality that attracts certain readers to certain writers. Like Miniver Cheevey, I have "thought and thought and thought and thought and thought about it." . . .

As a man gets older and his girth thicker, and his wits weaker, he seeks, I think, more and more in what he reads, for this courteousness, geniality, *mellowness*—oh, the wit and insight sans which all writing is valueless, must be there, of course, but, unless it is accompanied, illumined and overshadowed, by a brooding spirit of tolerance, St. Paul's charity—it profiteth the reader nothing. Summed up, the flavor of author (John Galsworthy's mot) which I seek for and relish when found, is mellowness. Arthur Colton has it and de la Mare; and Hilaire Belloc; and Thomas Beer. There are more, but I gotta quit this monologue sometime.

Grand Island, Nebraska. H. P.

Four addresses on publishing and bookselling problems by Mr. Geoffrey Faber, head of one of the younger houses in London, are collected in an excellent little book called *A Publisher Speaking* (Houghton Mifflin. $1). To these Mr. Faber adds some notes against literary censorships. He considers the functions of the publisher and the bookseller with excellent seriousness, regarding the work they do as of high importance to society. As he well says, "What other trade is there in the world so many-sided?"

Mr. Faber's talks are in the best of manners, easy and conversational in tone. One of the pleasantest asides is his confession that for three years he was manager of a brewery. "I have no sort of quarrel with brewing. It is an admirable trade, and beer is an admirable drink. But I have never been so bored in my life as I was during those three years. I learned then the lesson, which I shall never forget, that nothing in this world is so depressing as to spend one's life doing something in which one is not intrinsically interested."

Mr. Faber's little book reminds me of another admirable essay in the same field which was published exactly 30 years ago this spring—*A Publisher's Confession.* It was first printed in instalments in the Boston *Transcript* and issued in book form by the then young firm of Doubleday Page and Company. Some of the anonymous author's comments on trade and literary problems have dated in the interval. It was written during the period when (as Fred Melcher remarked the other day) the bookseller was busy writing *ced ccu* in all his fiction; which meant, in the old code-word *cumberland,* a $1.50 book to be sold for $1.12. But the ethics and spirit of good publishing have never been better expressed. There are several passages in *A Publisher's Confession* which are curious to look back at thirty years after. For instance his referring to himself as a diplomatist, an ambassador on behalf of literature. Also the incidental remark that "a great publishing trust or merger is impossible." The author of *A Publisher's Confession,* not divulged until long later, was Mr. Walter Hines Page.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

A Forerunner of "Men of Good Will"

THE BODY'S RAPTURE. By Jules Romains. New York: Liveright. 1935. $2.50.

Reviewed by THEODORE PURDY, JR.

WHILE not comparable in scope or significance with "Men of Good Will," this trilogy of novels by Jules Romains, known in its original French version as "Psyché," is nevertheless an impressive achievement. The first part, "Lucienne," is not new in English, having appeared some ten years ago in a translation by Waldo Frank. This book, in which the author has concentrated whatever narrative interest the trilogy possesses, was well if not over-enthusiastically received by the Gallic public and critics. Then after a pause during which M. Romains was engaged in greatly enhancing his reputation as a dramatist, the second and third portions of the whole work were brought out in rapid succession in 1928 and 1929. Bewilderment not unmixed with shocked moral sensibilities characterized the reviews at this time, and many people felt that Romains the writer of fiction had proved himself markedly inferior to Romains the playwright. Needless to say, the publication and success of his later novels corrected this impression.

The truth of the matter would appear to be that most of "The Body's Rapture" (a far less appropriate title than the original one) is scarcely classifiable as fiction. Once the simple but effective and psychologically correct love story of the poor music teacher Lucienne and her fiancé Pierre has been disposed of, the author embarks upon a most hazardous and difficult experiment. In "Le Dieu des Corps" he analyzes with physiological exactitude the marital relations of these young people. While this study is undoubtedly free of pornographic implications, it is more than usually daring, and, treated with all the resources of the author's subtle mentality as well as with full technical mastery, it becomes at times almost unbearably intimate. It is not to be wondered that the Parisians were disturbed by so aggressive a pæan of praise for the flesh, in no way disguised by the customary transplantation to a romantic or exotic background.

The full purpose of the author's experiment does not emerge, however, until the last part of the book, called "Quand le Navire. . . ." Since Lucienne's husband must continue his career as an officer in the merchant marine, their union is apparently destined to be broken up, save for the brief intervals during which Pierre's ship is in port or while he is on leave. But the creatures of M. Romains's "Unanimist" pen are not so easily defeated by circumstances. Why, the author asks, should this new third entity, the Couple, not continue to exist on a plane above ordinary considerations of space and matter? At this point the book definitely leaves the ground and becomes a metaphysical treatise rather than a novel. Pierre may be at sea and Lucienne at home in France, but thanks to the indivisibility of the Couple, she can appear *materially* in his cabin whenever she wishes to do so. Triumph of the Unanimist faith, and very nearly as great a one of the author's art, since he is almost able to persuade us to accept this supernatural climax.

Purposely, no doubt, all this is related in a scientific and rather detached way, the characters being carefully presented as normal, if somewhat intellectual, beings, free from hysteria or pathological complications of any sort. This procedure strikes a new note, placing the book in a class apart from previous fantasies of the sort, such as that in which Du Maurier succeeded in enveloping a similar legend in his now rather faded charm, thereby producing a best seller. M. Romains's aim is far higher, and if his success is also more questionable it is largely because the narrative values of his book are gradually submerged by its thesis. Even without believing in its result, it is not difficult to admire the boldness of his experiment and the great ability with which he has conducted it.

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Behind the News in the Far East

We must understand the Far East better if the sad story of misunderstanding and delusion which has been written into our European policies is not to be repeated more dangerously. But the East, and especially turbulent Japan and confused China, is no newspaper subject, as Vincent Sheean made clear in his "Personal History." It has a vitally important historical background without which the foreground of the present is incomprehensible. And even the happenings of the last few years have been so variously reported and interpreted that the reader dependent upon news, is helpless. Books are being written upon the Far East in increasing numbers, some good, some bad, some history, some interpretation. In the typical group reviewed below, selected from recent publications, one sees how important is the background of thought, and how diverse are the possible points of view, even on such a well known figure as Dr. Sun Yat-sen.—The Editor.

"Soviet China"

CHINA'S RED ARMY MARCHES. By Agnes Smedley. New York: The Vanguard Press. $2.50.

Reviewed by ALFRED H. HOLT

THIS spirited chronicle of what was happening in "Soviet China" during the years 1928-1931 is recommended to all who possess sufficient tolerance to read an informal history that makes no pretense at impartiality. The author knows a great deal about one side of the picture, and her book is exciting.

Where so many references are made to the Chinese Revolution, one is surprised to find the name of Sun Yat-sen studiously avoided, until one realizes that Miss Smedley's is a different revolution. The Kuomintang, since 1926 the arch enemy of the Reds, has skilfully capitalized the fabulous popularity of Dr. Sun, while playing down the ardent attachment to Russia that characterized his later years. To us who were in Canton during the Borodin period, when the ultra-radical Kuomintang was baiting the foreign devil with the very phrase, "running dogs of imperialism," of which Miss Smedley and her friends never tire, such a statement as this, in her book, appears a ludicrous mistake: "like the class brothers they had *always* been, these two little Nanking (Kuomintang) vessels slid up in the protecting shadow of the foreign monsters." Until the Chinese Reds make a place for Dr. Sun in their calendar of saints, the appeal of communism to the vast middle class that have had a little education will be distinctly limited. An illustration of the fact that the great majority of Miss Smedley's revolutionists are ignorant peasants from the interior is seen in her story of the amazement of many delegates to the first Soviet Congress when the electric lights were turned on. Let it be said, however, that education (directed of course by trained propagandists) is one of the main planks in the communist platform for China.

As in all propagandist literature about war and revolution, the atrocities practised (always by the enemy) are high-lighted; crowded hospitals are blown to pieces; political enemies are buried alive. Here and there is a hint, but only a hint, that a Red might become ruthless, under provocation. While at times Miss Smedley leans over backward to show that she is reporting the facts—as when, an eye-witness, she reveals that the radio operator at the first Chinese Soviet Congress tried long, but in vain, to get Moscow for the loud-speaker—at other times there is grave doubt as to whether she is, perhaps unconsciously, misrepresenting historical truth. It is altogether unlikely that her account of the "bombardment" of Changsha by imperialist gunboats will be accepted by the historian of the future.

Though the book is never dull, what humor there is is of a dark and saturnine, if not macabre, tinge, far enough removed from the gay and childlike humor of the Chinese. The fact is that she is desperately in earnest when trying hardest to be funny, as in the passage satirizing the conversion of General Chiang Kai-shek to Christianity, and ending with the pious bray of an army mule as an echo to the sob of an emotional Methodist. Her impatience with Christianity is boundless.

In a book whose preface was written by a professor of English, one may be forgiven for expecting better proofreading.

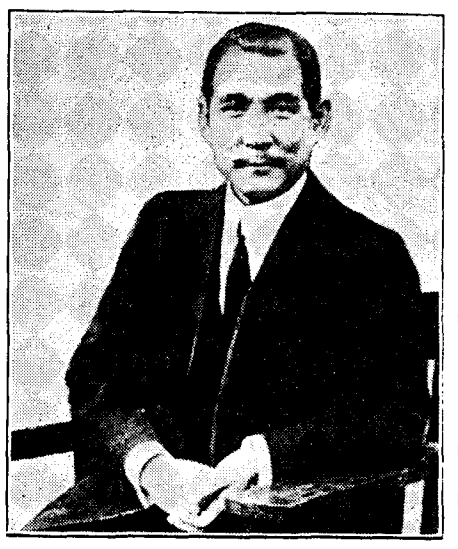
Chinese Liberator

SUN YAT-SEN: His Life and Its Meaning. By Lyon Sharman. New York: The John Day Co. $3.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE E. SOKOLSKY

LYON SHARMAN has done an important although unsympathetic and dull biography of Dr. Sun Yat-sen. The book is important because it contains a vast amount of material not otherwise available in the English language. Mr. Sharman apparently went to Chinese sources — mostly books, including Dr. Sun's own writings—whereas a genuine research job would have sent him to Dr. Sun's associates, friends, and enemies, many of whom are still alive in China.

The book is unsympathetic because Mr. Sharman does not like Dr. Sun; he does not approve of the revolution in China; he rather believes that some gradual evolutionary process such as Kan Yy-wei and Liang Chi-chao advocated would have done China more "good." To anyone who knew Sun Yat-sen, Mr. Sharman's biography is not only critical; it is frigid. It is like going through a man's application for a job and reconstructing a character from the answers to questions. That is just it: the answers are all there is to Mr. Sharman's work, but Dr. Sun is not there. He was warm, magnetic, forgiving, and amply practical, for he did, starting almost alone, upset the Manchu dynasty and set China on the trail to modernization. That he did not produce a completed picture of Broadway and Forty-second Street or Gary, Indiana, in China within a week or two does not make him an impractical dreamer. He was dealing with four hundred million individualists in a land without means of



SUN YAT-SEN

communication and with a high illiteracy. His job was to start the revolution. That he did, and that pointed task of his life Mr. Sharman missed.

Research workers often suffer from a naiveté which makes it difficult to understand why they don't see behind the record. All records are carefully prepared to keep posterity aglow. Mr. Sharman has gone to the record diligently but often childishly. For instance, his account of the role of Yuan Shih-kai in the history of China is indicative of an unawareness of how the game is played in China as elsewhere which, to me, is amusing, for I had a little finger in one or two of those games. For instance, I came across a quotation which I ghost-wrote for a famous Chinese and which Mr. Sharman takes more seriously than either of us did at the time. Mr. J. O. P. Bland will enjoy that tremendously when he reads this book, because he has an unerring sense of the grotesqueness of foreign political activities in China.

The fact is that Tong Shao-yi went down to Shanghai as Yuan Shih-kai's representative not to bring about a constitutional monarchy but to help get rid of the Manchus. It was a straight double-cross. Sun Yat-sen never wanted to relinquish the Presidency to Yuan Shih-kai, but Yuan gave him no alternative. He would have taken the Presidency from Sun by force. Mr. Sharman has this situation rather twisted. He could have got it straight by a visit to Tong Shao-yi at Canton or Tongkawan where in addition to getting the low-down, he would have met one of the few glamorous human beings left in this vale of the ordinary.

Yet when all is said, Mr. Sharman's book is not neglible; it does contain a wealth of unpublished material; it does represent painstaking research in a difficult field. Mr. Sharman has not, however, the facility to make the personages live; nor can he avoid trying to force Chinese into the mold of the American version of evangelical Christianity. These limitations unfortunately spoil an otherwise important volume.

⁂ ⁂

Mr. Sokolsky is a journalist who has been an editor in China, and Chinese correspondent for Occidental papers. He is the author of "The Tinder Box of Asia."

Japan's Personality

JAPAN IN CRISIS. By Harry Emerson Wildes. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.

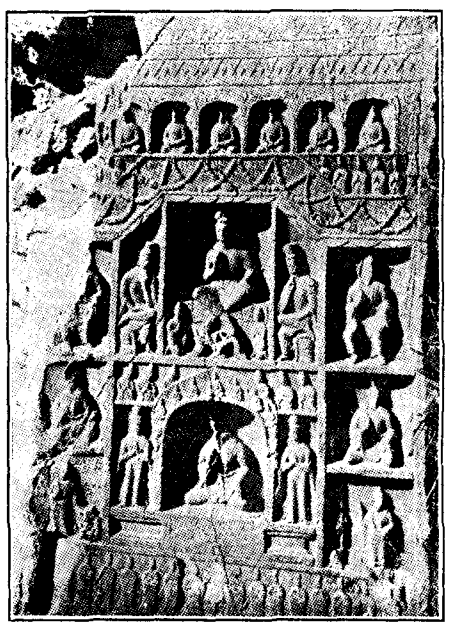
Reviewed by G. H. SEYBOLD

WITH the announced intention of pioneering on a search for the "personality" of Japan, Dr. Wildes surveys the national life in all its manifestations. The research has been thorough, the observations cogent, and one is inclined to agree not only with the major conclusions but also with his evaluations of the complex forces which the conflict of modern industrialism and feudal social organization has evolved.

Dr. Wildes concludes that Japan has no recourse but war if she would remain alive. The adventure and the booty would "provide a stimulation to endure the domestic ills a moment longer." He thinks Russia is "the best excuse." Yet he recounts that in August of last year three leading department stores of Kobe displayed the "Japanese-American war of 1936" with a realistic exhibition of charts and relief maps on which battlefields, trenches, and tanks were depicted, with patriotic lecturers on hand to ballyhoo the show. Whoever the proximate national enemy may be, it is apparent that the dominating militarists are missing no opportunity of whipping up the war spirit. Japan is bent on conquest in Asia, secure in the hope that no Western nation will fight. Internally Dr. Wildes thinks any upheaval toward the left is an "astronomical distance away." He shows how completely liberalism in politics and organization in labor have been squelched.

The casual observer who cherishes the idea that Japan has become modernized otherwise than technically and scientifically will be disabused of these opinions by a perusal of this book. The old and the new, the feudal and the modern persist in fantastic juxtaposition. Modern machinery is welcome, but Western culture and fashion are rejected. An Imperial official is prosecuted for giving away a cigarette presented by a subordinate of the Imperial household because he is guilty of disrespect to the Emperor, and 174 boys are arrested for wearing knickerbockers.

The book, which assumes that the reader possesses a considerable knowledge of basic Japanese conditions, could have been improved by the citation of a few more statistical facts. On the whole, however, the author has done more than a pioneering job in presenting the "personality" of Japan, and in view of the urgency of the issues she is forcing on the world, his volume is important and timely.



BAS-RELIEFS AND STATUES OF LUNG-MEN
From "A Pageant of Asia."

The Ingredients of Eastern Culture

A PAGEANT OF ASIA. By Kenneth Saunders. New York: Oxford University Press. $5.

Reviewed by LANGDON WARNER

IF you are to be scared off by the romantic choice of title for this book you will lose some uncommonly good reading and a great deal that provokes thought. The author is frankly no pedant and has put together the facts provided by special historians of the Orient in a kind of swift marching order that compels one to watch while the pageant goes by.

Like every sound historian Dr. Kenneth Saunders feels the unity and the purpose of his procession. But he does not offend us by preaching about it. He leaves us to discover what it may be.

Dates do not fascinate him but the chronology of progress does, especially the chronology of the progress of ideas that have possessed Oriental nations. As a student of comparative religion who has written and thought on these subjects for the last twenty years and wandered and lived in the Orient, he has caught what I imagine to be an uncommonly just estimate of the ingredients of Eastern culture. Hinduism and Buddhism are not to him mere catalogues of old creeds and tenets held by separate divisions of colored persons living in remote countries. They are the attitudes of man to God and, obviously, no thinking or thoughtless person in those surroundings and generations could quite escape them.

The Chinese and Japanese history selected by the author for his pageant is admirably presented within its short compass and his debt to Sansom's extraordinary work is acknowledged. Here again not dates but ideas and tendencies receive the emphasis. A carping critic would probably point out that the Confucianism so significant in medieval and later Japan should have been definitely labelled *neo* to emphasize how little it had to do with the original doctrines and to show its adaptation by the Japanese to fit their national temper. So too, in the matter of Oriental art, which he illustrates by admirable and clear reproductions unusually well chosen, the author's point of view will be criticized. He speaks apologetically of carvings on the Barhut rail as being "weak in perspective." My somewhat horrified comment would be—what honest craftsman in stone would so misuse his chisel and mallet as to try to be strong in a trick which is proper to brush and pencil? He tells us that the Horyuji bronze triad is of "Wei Tatar provenance" in spite of the fact that it is signed and dated by a Japanese—but perhaps he means merely to emphasize its Wei style. Such things I admit are trivial, but for the publishers of this admirably made volume to give us no maps is entirely unforgivable.

⁂ ⁂

Langdon Warner, a member of the department of fine arts of Harvard University, was in charge of the first and second China expeditions for the Fogg Art Museum of which institution he is a field fellow.

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So Red the Rose *19th Big Printing* $2.50

Duping the Consumer

THE POPULAR PRACTICE OF FRAUD. By T. Swann Harding. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1935. $3.50.

Reviewed by HAROLD D. LASSWELL

LET no sober judging citizen recoil from this book. The author is no self-righteous toad, puffed with the wind of virtue, croaking in the muck. Mr. Harding is bold, calm, clear; his facts are permitted to shriek for themselves.

The topic is the art of duping the American consumer. The most innocuous form entices the consumer to buy some useless or exorbitant article. Gargling, we are once more informed, has no bacteriacidal or therapeutic usefulness. The entire cosmetic industry is essentially "parasitic"; the best skin treatment remains good soap and water, plus a cheap pharmaceutical cold cream.

Duplicity is more serious when the consumer is lured into using dangerous articles. We are told that most headache remedies contain certain dangerous drugs like acetanilid which are poisonous, and should be administered, if at all, under expert supervision. Potassium iodide is widely sold in proprietary remedies for asthma, hay fever, and other diseases; it is advertised as harmless, yet is deadly dangerous to people with arrested tuberculosis.

The virtue of this book is less the telling instance than the judicious treatment. There is an explicit reaction against the "hell-fire" technique of recent propaganda, which has overdone the atrocity theme. While applauding the ardor and often the usefulness of many professional friends of the consumer, Mr. Harding deplores a certain looseness in matters of simple fact. A six-page appendix is given over to the citation of passages in "100,000,000 Guinea Pigs," a recent volume by Messrs. Schlink and Kallett, with which Mr. Harding disagrees.

There is a timely synopsis of the struggle over the Tugwell Bill in the last Congress. With admirable ingenuity, Mr. Harding compares editorial pronouncements with advertising practices during 1934. Many newspaper and periodical editorials declared that the proposed legislation was unnecessary because of the present purity of the press. No one will read Mr. Harding's analysis of their advertising columns and remain unduly impressed by the purity plea.

By this time is has occurred to the alert modern reader that a book on fraud in advertising should explain as well as describe it. Mr. Harding is not unaware of the connection between advertising revenue and editorial bias, but he follows his usual policy of presenting data. He does not add insult to profit. It is not amiss to report that, according to the figures of the Federal Trade Commission, $350,000,000 is annually paid for the advertisement of drugs, cosmetics, and medicine. Nor is it amiss to remark that the releases of the Federal Trade Commission, which analyze frauds, are usually ignored by the press, and that the yearly appropriation for the regulatory work of the Food and Drug Administration is a million and a half.

With the same delicacy the author deals with the doctor's place in fraud. He calls attention to the excellent work of the councils of the American Medical Association, but deplores the matter carried in official publications. *Hygeia,* the health magazine of the A. M. A., advertised in one typical issue the claim of a breakfast cereal to make firm teeth and the claim of dental creams to be antiseptic, and other such items. Since many physicians receive their post-graduate instruction from the advertisements as well as the articles in medical journals, such practices cannot be passed over with complacency.

The author is fully cognizant of the extent to which fraud is stimulated by the profits system; but the general tenor of his book is reformist, supporting the views now current in the Food and Drug Administration about the legislative changes which are at present practicable.

Although this volume is written for the non-specialist, it is not unreasonable to point out that material is available for a much more discriminating analysis of the place of fraud in our economic life than Mr. Harding provides. Where are the markets in which fraud is most abundant? What is the connection between profits and fraud?

Before resting content with sweeping generalizations about the connections of fraud and capitalism, it is worth showing that some highly profitable industries are free from advertising fraud. The study of industrial profits in the United States between 1919 and 1928 showed that the manufacture of scientific instruments maintained about the highest level of profits. Certain other conditions than high profit must be present if fraud is to thrive, and a balanced picture can now be painted.

"Consumer consciousness" in the United States has recently gained support from the desire to find some goals toward which capitalistic society can be directed. How can combinations of sentimental and vested interests be developed which will prove capable of demanding and enforcing performance standards on American business? Is there any connection between consumer consciousness and the inauguration of policies which mitigate the principal sources of instability in the economic system? These larger issues have been left to one side, or understated, in the present book, admirable as it is in so many respects.

Harold D. Lasswell is a member of the department of political science at the University of Chicago.

Bum and Mission Stiff

WAITING FOR NOTHING. By Tom Kromer. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1935. $2.

Reviewed by ROLAND MULHAUSER

INMATES at the Welfare Island Penitentiary snorted when the first pages of this book were read to them. Drifters, bums, and mission stiffs simply do not talk in the manner assumed by Tom Kromer in his account of sinking through these years of depression. They act as he acted, they do as he did; perhaps they feel and think the same, but such men and the author do not talk alike. His lingo, the professional patter of the professional down-and-outer, is correct; his style is laconic and redundant, yet his stream of consciousness is too complete for actuality. The morbid thoughts that throb in the mind of a bum are jotted in staccato sentences.

In spite of the "four or five small incidents" that keep this from being "strictly autobiographical," there can be no question but that the author is telling a true tale. More articulate than those with whom he floundered, he was one of them all the same, living their life, but he had a peculiarly objective way of seeing what happened. There is a static calm in his point of view suggesting compression and numbness beyond pain. There is no sentimentalizing pity. There are no emotional outbursts. Nothing but hunger. Still, it is a shocking book: a picture of unmitigated depravity.

Flop houses, soup lines, box cars, and the "jungle" of the tramps form the setting. A dead level of colorless automatons shuffle by. The lethargy of these useless masses, waiting hopelessly for nothing in a lifeless bin, is disturbed only occasionally by the futile attempts of a man such as Kromer who is trying to break away.

Ever the struggle is against him. He attempts to knock a man out and roll him, but the stick never strikes—he loses his nerve. Fidgeting before the bank teller's window, he tangles the gat in his coat lining, never exposes it, never uses it—he slinks away, baffled, broke, and hungry.

He sleeps on rainy nights in vacant lofts where the police arrest him. He sleeps, when he has the money, in a four-bit flophouse; when he has none, it frequently is the mission. He knows the God of City Missions; he is preached to, prayed for, and saved—so that he may sleep indoors. He sees men die; he watches people starve; he seldom eats. He struggles—and he dedicates his book "To Jolene who turned off the gas."

Roland Mulhauser is library director of the Department of Correction, Welfare Island, New York City.

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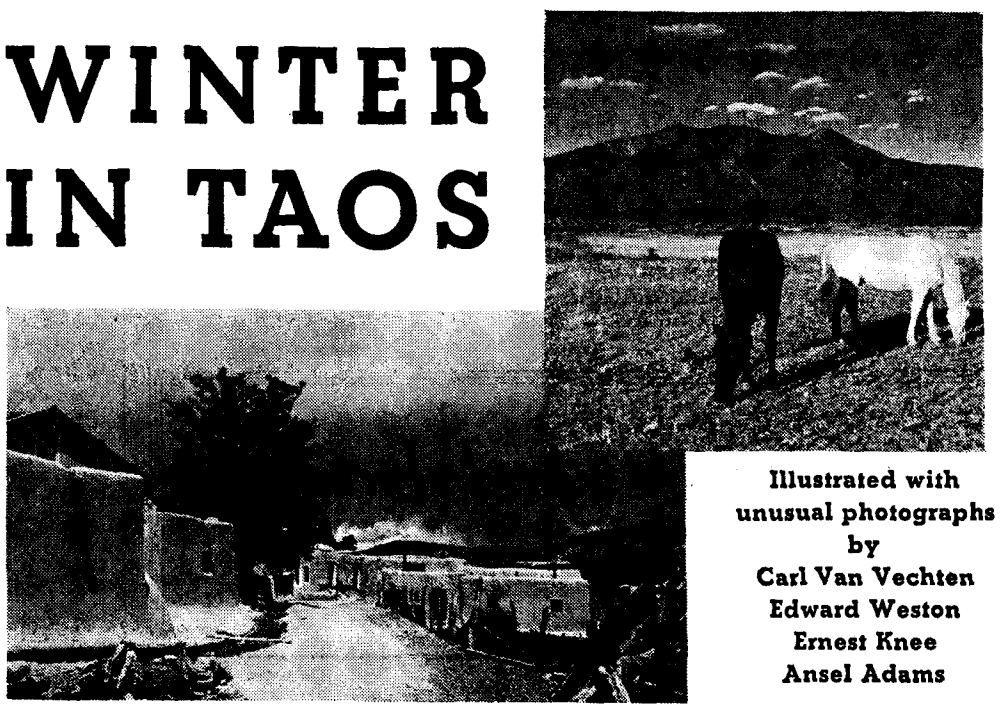

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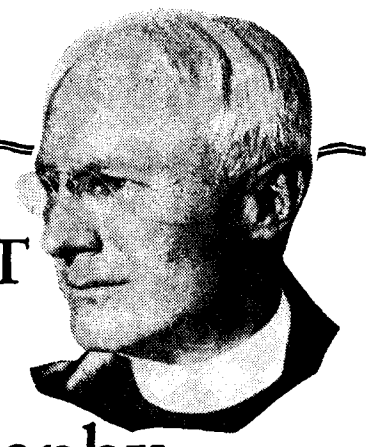

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Gold and the Price Level

GOLD AND PRICES. By George F. Warren and Frank A. Pearson. New York: John Wiley & Sons. 1935. $5.

Reviewed by HAROLD G. MOULTON

THIS volume is a revised edition of "Prices," the authors explaining that "so many new chapters have been added and such extensive revisions have been made, that it is deemed advisable to give it a new name so that the two books can be distinguished." The revisions consist chiefly in the reorganization of old Chapter V into three chapters and the addition of three new chapters dealing with The Price of Gold, Effects of Changing the Price of Gold, and Other Theories of Recovery. There are also a number of new charts and tables. The basic conclusions of the preceding volume have not been modified. Particular interest, of course, attaches to the views expressed with reference to the dollar devaluation program.

The authors state that, "It is the aim of this work to add something to the science of economics." It is permissible, therefore, to center this review around the question whether the authors have succeeded in this attempt—whether, indeed, their own analysis is scientific in character. The principal tests to be applied are the consistency of the analysis presented and the adequacy of the evidence submitted in support of certain primary contentions. In the space available a selective process must perforce be followed. Although it is very difficult, because of the lack of clarity and systematic exposition in the authors' writing, to present a succinct resumé of their arguments, we shall attempt to summarize their analysis in a series of propositions which appear to express their basic ideas.

Proposition 1. For seventy-five years before the World War

$$\frac{\text{Gold}}{\text{Physical volume of production}} = \text{Prices.}$$

"If gold monetary stocks increased more rapidly than other things, prices rose; if they increased less rapidly, prices fell."

It will be observed that the level of prices is here conceived as an arithmetical result of the division of the number of units of gold by the number of units of commodities. From the data presented in the accompanying chart in the book, it appears, however, that the relationship claimed is definitely untrue for a third of the time.

Proposition 2. From 1915 to 1933 changes in the level of prices are attributable to fluctuations in the *value* of gold, resulting from fluctuations in the demand therefor.

According to proposition 1, prices would not have risen between 1915 and 1920, for example, because the world's supply of gold increased at roughly the same rate as the physical volume of production. To explain the great rise in prices that occurred, the authors shift from the arithmetical equation and contend that prices of commodities reflect changes in the value of the standard, gold. It was the discontinuance of the gold standard by many countries during the war which reduced the demand for gold and thus "made it lose value or made prices rise." The huge expansion of credit during the war thus apparently has nothing to do with prices.

Similarly, the great fall in prices beginning in 1929 is explained not by a decreasing ratio of gold to physical volume of production, but by a sudden world-wide return of the demand for gold. The leading nations engaged in a "frantic" bidding for gold, thus raising its value and causing prices to fall.

Two bits of evidence are submitted in support of the view that the supply of gold suddenly became inadequate in 1929 to support the existing price level. The first pertains to the reëstablishment of the gold standard. It is pointed out that Sweden and Germany returned to the gold basis in 1924, England and the Netherlands in 1925, Belgium in 1926, Italy in 1927, and France in 1928. Just why no effect was manifested on prices until late in 1929, at which time no additional countries are listed as returning to the gold standard, is not explained.

The evidence submitted in support of the contention that there was a gold shortage in the United States in 1929 is as follows: "The total credit outstanding was high in proportion to total gold supply, indicating that the gold was fully used. It was so fully used as to cause a reaction." The table included shows merely that the ratio of "monetary circulation plus deposits" to gold was somewhat higher than in the period 1924 to 1927, but lower than in 1928. The only data which would indicate whether "gold was fully used," namely, the excess reserves of the banking system, are omitted from the table. Their inclusion would have led to a very different conclusion.

Proposition 3. The great decline of prices in 1920-21 is attributable to a contraction of credit and government financial policies. Mr. Warren quotes from his own price forecast of February 1919 as follows:

> As the volume of currency is contracted prices will fall. . . . The rate of drop in the general price level depends primarily upon the financial policy that is followed. Ordinarily the period when currency of all kinds would be at its maximum would be expected to come within a few months after the floating of the last government loan.

These statements are in flat contradiction to the contention that the war-time rise in prices was due solely to a fall in the demand for gold rather than to war-time financial policies and credit expansion. They are also in contradiction to the authors' repeated contentions that credit does not affect prices.

Proposition 4. Price changes like those of 1921 and 1931-33 are explained not by concurrent but by subsequent changes in the ratio of gold to production.

The authors admit that in these periods the supply of gold was increasing, while the supply of commodities was declining, and that according to the general theory such variations would be accompanied by an increase in prices, rather than by a sharp reduction. This reverse trend is explained as follows:

> The reduced production divided into the gold supply . . . would call for high prices. In this case the reduced production was a result of low prices. This results in . . . short-price movements in the opposite direction from that which the ratio would indicate. . . . To make these short-time deviations fit prices, they should be compared with prices at a later date.

The authors do not, however, tell us with the prices of what later year those of 1920-21, for example, should be compared in order to make the price changes which occurred in 1920-21 square with their theory of the relation of the gold supply to the volume of production.

Proposition 5. The reduction in the weight of the gold dollar, and in consequence in the value of the gold unit, operates not only to raise the general level of prices but also to readjust the structure of prices, raising sharply the prices of commodities which have fallen heavily and only a little those which have declined but slightly.

According to the authors' general theory there should have been a rise of sixty-nine per cent in the general level of prices. The truth is that the general price level (Bureau of Labor index number) rose approximately twenty-three per cent between February 1933 and February 1934, the dates used by the authors in their comparisons. They seek to explain this away by stressing the point that the prices which have not fallen much should not have risen by sixty-nine per cent. But they fail to observe that if the general average was to be raised in proportion to the rise in the price of gold enough commodities should have risen more than sixty-nine per cent to offset those which rose less than that amount.

The relatively sharp rise in the prices of certain foodstuffs and raw materials has been due in part to the drought and government subsidies, but more largely to the depreciation of the dollar in relation to foreign currencies. This latter factor was brought about, it is true, by the gold policy, but the authors nowhere attribute the slightest importance to the effect of the depreciation of the dollar on the prices of commodities entering into international trade.

In conclusion it should be noted that the authors do not recommend any further reduction in the weight of the dollar.

* *

Harold G. Moulton is president of the Brookings Institution, Washington, D. C., and the author of a large number of books on economic subjects.

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Mountain People

CABINS IN THE LAUREL. By Muriel Earley Sheppard. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 1935. $3.

Reviewed by JONATHAN DANIELS

APAPATCY, a region in the Caroline mountains, has been twice lost. The high mountains kept its valleys like pools of the past in which the life of the folk went on in old patterns of living and thinking while the world beyond the mountains was profoundly altered by war and machines and a crowding civilization. Then writers came over the mountains to discover it and distort it. Some made a fierce, dangerous folk and some a more than quaint people who in the modern world discussed the commonplaces of life in a language like unrhymed Elizabethan poetry. Fortunately for us and for Apalatcy there have been other writing people, a few earlier and more recently. They saw a folk different only in the long, tight integrity of their race and their customs who like other men make a diverse world of good and evil, fierceness and foolishness, but who, unlike most other men in our times, still find contentment in few possessions and the simplest living. Even that is passing with the Ford and Chevrolet and the good road, but at its passing or as the spirit of Apalatcy retreats further up into the coves, Muriel Earley Sheppard has told its story and interpreted its spirit, and Bayard Wootten has taken its photograph. Few have ever made a country and a people more understandable than they.

Wisely Mrs. Sheppard has undertaken to present the world of the mountain people in the brief space of that Toe River Valley, the name of which white settlers distorted in the unimaginativeness of the pioneer from the singing Indian word of Estatoe. In what today comprises three North Carolina counties, she has told the story of the Englishes, the Baileys, Penlands, Buchanans, McNeals, Gouges, Burlesons, Silvers, and Coxes who came in their wagons up from the hills to begin a life and a story they have not yet ended. The high mountain barriers of the valley and the unchanging race of the people gives an integrity to Mrs. Sheppard's story of pioneering and hunting and a war that divided families and tore the region not merely with formal conflict but with the raids of guerrillas and the brutalities of gangs of deserters.

Wife of a mining engineer in the country, Mrs. Sheppard tells with steady interest the story of the mining that goes back beyond the oldest settler to Indians or Spaniards who left a deep shaft in which interest was long discouraged by the mountain practice of using it as a place in which to push dead mules, horses, and dogs instead of burying them. And then more recently the work in mica and feldspar which not only brought some riches but also some murder to the mountains. From first to last, however, Mrs. Sheppard's story is of people, from Frankie Silver, who murdered her husband and hanged for it, through the mountain riots and killings caused by the importation of Italians and Negroes in labor gangs, to the trial of old Jeter Purdy who killed in a quarrel with Waites Stillwell over his wife in 1902 and was tried and acquitted after his sister had given him up in a moment of anger in 1931.

But by no means are all the stories tales of violence; more have to do with weddings and quiltings, the day by day tasks of getting a living out of steep land and the Sunday sociability about the church. Better still, many of the stories are told by the mountain people themselves: By old Uncle Zach McHone, whose father was an awful man to drink by spells; by Doc Hoppas, the story teller and banjo player; by Uncle Rube Moseley, who saw service putting down the Ku Klux; and by Preacher Queen, for whom life comes to the simplicity of a good God to look out for him and see that he gets two dollars every month for his house rent.

Beside Mrs. Sheppard's interesting story the Bayard Wootten photographs splendidly serve to make reality of this Valley world. Unlike too many photographs, they do not serve to pull the reader's imagination down to a disappointing veracity from a stirring text. Where they do betray the tale, if they do betray it, is in the pictures of the young folk, of the churches and of the mountain town. They emphasize the passage of that inaccessibility which held the mountain people in a pattern while the Piedmont sped in change. Apalatcy was lost and Apalatcy was found, and in a little while Apalatcy will be gone. But it is excellent to have its portrait so splendidly done before it passes.

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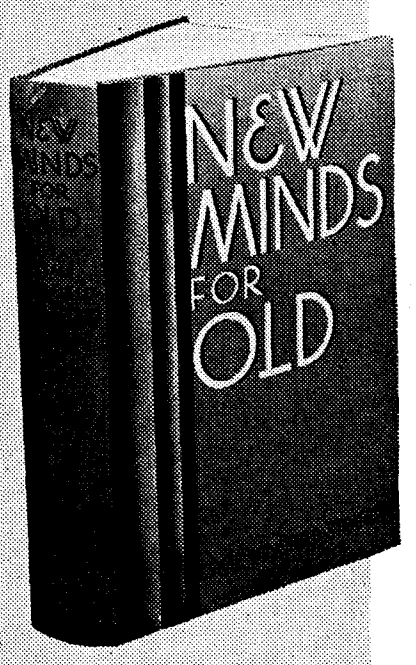

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Biography

THERE IS NO TRUCE: A Life of Thomas Mott Osborne. By Rudolph W. Chamberlain. Macmillan. 1935. $3.50.

Only a sympathizer thoroughly convinced of the intrinsic greatness of Thomas Mott Osborne, reformer, would have written his biography with such candor as Mr. Rudolph W. Chamberlain has done. The idiosyncrasies that have made Osborne a martyr, a genius, an accentric, or a crank—depending upon the critic—are described so judiciously that we have, instead, a human being surcharged with tradition and rectitude, talent and showmanship, energy and fervor. Here, then, is the lusty life of a genuinely chaste character. Amenable as such a person would be to the glib analysis of psychography, the author studiously avoids this possible interpretation. He presents much factual material and only occasionally suggests the relative significance of its diverse and seemingly contradictory nature. His book, coming almost ten years after the death of its subject, presents a definitive, though none the less dramatic, biography.

From reading the "epilogue" which starts the book with an account of the apparent futility of his efforts and with an all-too-human summary of the man, one might decide that here is a story of self-indulgent martyrdom in a bizarre person—brisk reading for the horror-hounds. Yet upon finishing the book with its "prologue" to the future, having followed Osborne's melodramatic route through youth, business, politics, and prisons, one is more than likely to be signing checks for the Osborne Association commemorating his name and continuing his work. Ineffectual as he appeared, unerring as he was in choosing the losing side, and exaggerated as were his simplicities, there is growing evidence that his influence as a reformer increases as his personality recedes into the comprehending tolerance of time.

R. M.

Fiction

GRANDSONS. By Louis Adamic. Harpers. 1935. $2.50.

Louis Adamic is one of the really important American writers. His "Native's Return" was the best book of its kind in a decade, his "Dynamite" has been properly reissued. But he is not, apparently, a good novelist, and there is no reason why he should be. There are too many novelists, and too few Louis Adamics. "Grandsons" is a study of an American with the "jitters." It is a sympathetic and moving analysis of what makes the sensitive American mind grow wrong. It has characters, such as racketeer sub hero, that are excellently done. But the book is essentially an essay on America, and its method of telling, which is the rather clumsy device of a series of confessions by the American hero to his foreign born friend, does not make good narrative, indeed clogs the story and impedes the criticism and makes verbose the description, which, handled in a direct instead of an indirect fashion, might have made a more important book. The dose of contemporary Americanism in this novel is excellent. It is the lubricant of fiction designed to make it slip down the easy way of narrative to which one objects.

WEEP NOT FOR THE DEAD. By Michel Matveev. Knopf. 1935. $2.50.

This book is another hybrid, the child of a union between direct autobiography and fiction. The hybrid method appeals to some authors as an easy way to present their actual experiences without exercising the control that is called for outside the realm of fiction. Yet one wishes that M. Matveev had made up his mind, in this case, for one or the other, since he adds nothing to compensate for the latitude he has allowed himself.

The narrator is a Ukrainian Jew. His story opens with a pogrom in his native district at the time when the Whites and the Reds were struggling for supremacy in Southern Russia. It then follows his escape with his family into Rumania. The bulk of the book relates the persecutions which they suffered at the hands of the suspicious Rumanian police, and every page is ghastly with accounts of torture and brutality, of the misery of the hunted refugees. Yet the effect is less of horror than of endless monotony. The book has only one motif: people waiting in filthy police-prisons, listening to the shrieks and groans of the tortured. The author (or the narrator) seems to be afflicted with a sort of professional misery that never varies with his circumstances.

The novel might have had some emotional impact if M. Matveev had chosen to introduce characters into it. The narrator and the members of his family are, however, kept anonymous; they are referred to merely as "my brother," "my wife," etc. The effect is somewhat like those diagramatic outline drawings that are occasionally appended to group photographs, with each figure numbered for identification. And no matter how horrible the background, one can feel little pity where no individual human beings are concerned. For it is the person who suffers, much more than the kind of suffering, that counts in fiction.

L. J. H., Jr.

Miscellaneous

OLD DEADWOOD DAYS. By Estelline Bennett. Scribners. 1935. $2.50.

Philip Ashton Rollins, author of "The Cowboy," etc., has written a brief note to introduce this remarkable book of reminiscences in a new edition by virtue of a new publisher, since its earlier embodiment is now unavailable save through some rare-book store. Miss Bennett knew the old town of Deadwood in the Black Hills, in Dakota Territory, in the '80s; and a near relative, who reminisced much to her, had known it in the famous year of 1876. All the characters of the time, in the forefront of which stands "Calamity Jane," come to life in these pages. The book is richly anecdotal and so clear in description that one gets to know this most typical of prospecting towns extremely well, its gamblers, its sky-pilots, its ladies of light virtue, the stagecoach aristocracy, and so on. When, in my own youth, I saw The Deadwood Coach come lurching round the circus ring, set upon by Indians in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, I did not realize its actuality in the history of our land. But Estelline Bennett, who was a little girl in the old Deadwood, tells me all about the stage-coach days and, indeed, of the famous time when the treasure coach was held up by road agents. As source material this book is the real thing, and as richly picturesque narrative it is an unusual memoir of frontier days. And what a portrait gallery of American types that have vanished!

W. R. B.

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Seven Psalms. A T. Case. Womans Press.

REPRINTS

Shipmasters of Cape Cod. H. C. Kittredge. Houghton. $3.50. *Everyman's Garden.* M. Schling. Macmillan. $2. *Ladies in Revolt.* A. Graham. Coomans Press. *The Romance of Exploration and Emergency First-Aid from Stanley to Byrd.* Burroughs Wellcome. *Ten Days That Shook the World.* J. Reed. Modern Library. 95 cents. *Cranford.* E. C. Gaskell. Oxford Univ. Pr. $2.50.

TRAVEL

Scotland on Fifty Dollars. S. A. Clark. McBride. $1.90. *Belgium on Fifty Dollars.* S. A. Clark. McBride. $1.90.

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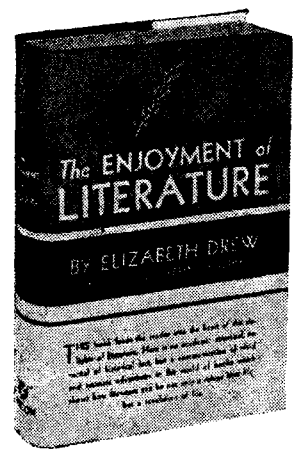

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Inquiries in regard to the choice of books should be addressed to MISS LOVEMAN, c/o *The Saturday Review*. A stamped and addressed envelope should be enclosed for reply.

A CLUB PROGRAM

B. N. P. of St. Louis, Mo., *asks for a suggestion for a program for a club of thirty members which has been discussing some of the recent books on European conditions during the past year.*

SINCE B. N. P.'s club devoted itself during the last twelvemonth to matters political, social, and economic, possibly it would be interested now in swinging away from the concerns of government to some of the applications of art and science which serve as escape from the pressing problems of modern society, and since it has focussed on Europe hitherto it might enjoy for a change taking these manifestations in their incidence on America. I think an interesting program could be built about the status in America of various crafts, the effect of the machine upon American life (though here, I'll admit, the club will be going back to economic discussion in large part), advertising, the radio, the motion picture. There is, for instance, that interesting book, issued a few years ago by the Russell Sage Foundation, IMMIGRANT GIFTS TO AMERICAN LIFE, which, by describing the purposes and content of a number of exhibitions of immigrant arts and crafts, presents a survey of the handicrafts, the arts, and the festivals which its alien population is contributing to the civilization of the United States. Then there is ARTS IN AMERICAN LIFE (McGraw-Hill), by Frederic Paul Keppel and Robert L. Duffus, which, in addition to the usual subjects (including music) covered by the term "the arts," enters into a discussion of art education, advertising, art in daily life, commercial design, dancing, the theatre, and the screen, and adds a chapter on government and art. Such a book opens up a multitude of subjects for discussion, as does also such another as NEW BACKGROUNDS FOR A NEW AGE (Harcourt, Brace), by Edwin A. Park. This is a study of the effect of the machine age upon art which includes a rapid historical survey and comment upon decoration and ornament, art industries and trade, house decoration and architecture. For the more economic aspects of the machine age it would be well to add to the foregoing works Stuart Chase's MEN AND MACHINES (Macmillan) which has been the springboard to much debate both written and spoken.

Most of us are extremely ignorant of the technique of the movies to which all of us go, and it ought therefore to be interesting to get the insight into the making of a picture which a volume like Arthur E. Krow's THE TALKIES (Holt) affords. This is a popular exposition of the entire technique of motion picture production, and supplemented by MOTION PICTURE CAMERAMAN (Scribners), by Edwin G. Lutz, should yield interesting facts for report. Finally there is Daniel Gregory Mason's TUNE IN, AMERICA (Knopf), to speed B. N. P.'s club along to lively discussion of various aspects of American life. Mr. Mason in it takes up the influence of good and bad photography, of the movietone and the radio, and discusses also college orchestras, glee clubs, etc. And now, by way of proving that nothing is final, even saying so, I add to what I said was my final suggestion, another book which alone contains enough matter for discussion for several meetings of B. N. P.'s club, OUR MOVIE MADE CHILDREN (Macmillan), by Henry James Forman. Mr. Forman has boiled down the findings of scientific examinations into the effect of the motion picture upon children as regards not only their mental and moral outlook but their physical condition. It is an interesting book and one which any parent can read with profit.

EMBROIDERY

L. R. F. of Otis, Ind., *asks on behalf of a friend who lives abroad, whether there is any American Embroidery Magazine which she can procure. "Being of the male sex myself," he writes, "the whole thing is quite new to me and I'm certain I couldn't find the difference between embroidery and what she does not want, fashionable needle work . . . A book might do as well but I must confess the whole thing is strange, foreign to me . . . if she had said cows or birds or Greek literature or how it feels to have clover hay down your neck I would be more at home."*

Well, I can't say I'm much of an authority on embroidery myself having scarcely done any since the distant days when it was fashionable to sprinkle clover blossoms in natural colors over centerpieces, but as it happens I do know of the very book that ought to fill the need of L. R. F.'s friend, having pored over it only two or three weeks ago when it came to my desk. It is M. Thomas's DICTIONARY OF EMBROIDERY STITCHES (Morrow: $2) and a complete guide it is indeed. Here, with instructions explicit enough for the novice, are directions for any sort of embroidery the heart of woman could desire. An older, standard work which includes embroidery is Thérèse de Dillmont's ENCYCLOPEDIA OF NEEDLEWORK (Westerman: $1.50), which gives a description of the processes and materials of every sort of needlework. As to magazines I mistrusted the listings in the PERIODICAL DIRECTORY since the latest issue of that book bore the date 1932 and the slaughter of periodicals as a result of the depression makes all old lists suspect. I called its editor, Miss Ulrich, on the telephone in her office in the New York Public Library where she is working on a revision of the directory to be brought out this fall, and by a strange coincidence found that she was at the very moment engaged on the entry Embroidery and had all her reference cards before her on her desk. Sure enough, some of the magazines listed in 1932 have passed to the great beyond (or dropped into the abyss of oblivion), but one published in Maine, still seems to exist. This is *Needlecraft, a Magazine of Home Arts*, published by The Needlecraft Publishing Company, 15 Chapel Street, Augusta. Its cost is fifty cents for two years.

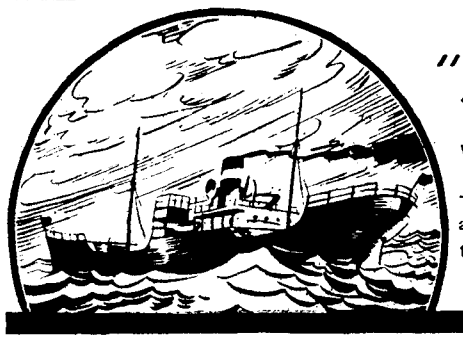
MORE ON AEOLIAN HARPS

W. H. Hanna, of White Plains, N. Y., *apropos of the query I printed some time ago from E. E., of Los Angeles, Calif., concerning æolian harps writes: "If E. E. is interested in harps she might do well not to overlook Gaelic sources. In an edition of Herbert Trench's poems the frontispiece or title page is decorated with the skeletal head and horns of the ancient (pre-historic) Irish elk strung as a harp in Aeolian or Gaelic style."*

Over the Counter

The Saturday Review's Guide to Current Attractions

Trade Mark	*Label*	*Contents*	*Flavor*
HARD COUNTRY AND GOLD *Clem Yore* (Macaulay: $2.)	Outdoors	Western author invades the Yukon scene with hero, gal, and mystery set-up.	Standard
LOVE LIKE A SHADOW *Lois Lodge* (Phoenix: $2.)	Novel	Throughout her career in college and the big town our heroine suffers the doublecross from assorted objects of her affections.	Fried Lesbians
THE FIRST WOMAN *Margaret Culkin Banning* (Harper: $2.)	Novel	Nice girl strives to keep her hands clean in practical politics.	Superior
EASTERN HOLIDAY *Ruth Blodgett* (Harcourt, Brace: $2.)	Novel	Tightly constructed little story of emotions that swept a recently widowed mother and her three nearly grown children during spring vacation.	Neat



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—NEW YORK TIMES

CALL ME ISHMAEL

By LOYD COLLINS

■ "An exciting yarn of the sea! There is a good share of humor in the book . . . and high excitement before you are through with it."
—NEW YORK TIMES

■ "The author has looked at the world about him and the men who hang about the waterfront and go to sea. It would be difficult to withhold one's admiration for the sure way in which he handles his material, using men as actors simultaneously in an outward adventure and an inner drama."—N. Y. HERALD TRIBUNE. *Dodd, Mead* $2.00

Recommended by the Book-of-the-Month Club

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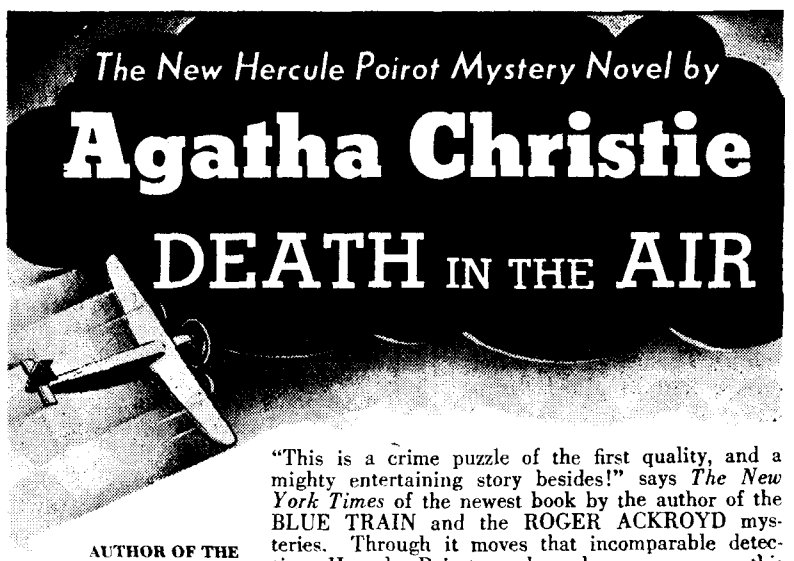

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"Very Good" is the *Criminal Record* rating the Saturday Review gives to "Death in the Air." $2.00

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HARPERS

COMING APRIL SIXTH

(Special to the Booktrade)

THE Spring Number of *The Saturday Review* is coming next week. In addition to the publishers' announcements of the new Spring books, it will contain a timely leading article on World Peace by Oswald Garrison Villard, a profile by Ann Bridgers of Thomas Wolfe, author of *Of Time and the River*, a survey of the general trend in books by Henry Seidel Canby, as well as contributions from Elmer Davis, Allan Nevins, Colonel House, Clayton Hamilton, Howard Mumford Jones, and Christopher Morley. Booksellers wishing to increase their orders for this particular number should communicate at once with the Bookstore Department of the SRL at 25 West 45th St., New York City.

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Alexander II and the Golden Age of Russia

TSAR OF FREEDOM

By Stephen Graham

Author of Ivan the Terrible

Alexander II—liberal Tsar of Russia—devoted his life to freeing the serfs and improving the conditions of his people. His reward was to be blown to pieces by a Nihilist bomb in 1881 at the age of sixty-three. To understand present-day Russia and the events of 1914 and 1917, it is essential to have a knowledge of nineteenth century Russia. Mr. Graham, with characteristic vividness and force, gives us this picture. $3.50

A New Book

By EZRA POUND

Make It New

An anthology of Ezra Pound's criticism from 1912 to the present time on a variety of subjects ranging from the Troubadours and Elizabethan classicists to modern French poetry and Henry James. This is perhaps Mr. Pound's best critical document. $3.75

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Eugene O'Neill

SEVEN volumes have now appeared of the "Wilderness Edition" of Eugene O'Neill's plays, published by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, of the twelve which are projected. The typographic design of the books is by Mr. Elmer Adler, and the printing has been done by the Scribner Press.

Granting that actable plays ought never to be read and that the other kind ought not to be written, the fact remains that the work of so distinguished a playwright as Mr. O'Neill should be preserved in permanent form. The present set is in large octavo format, stoutly bound in red cloth, with excellent photogravure frontispieces. The type is a large, easily read Baskerville, with the details of the printing well carried out.

Such plays as these require more than ordinary skill in the arrangement of the dialogue and the stage directions; clarity has been attained by a few simple devices which do not obstruct the reading. The fundamental fault with the format of the edition seems to me to be that the plays have been spread over too much paper. A smaller type, a more concise setting, and a smaller paper size would have made a better book, even if the series as a whole were not so impressive. With first-class workmanship, such as these books evince, one could afford to condense them into smaller form. The title-pages are designed with an interlaced border design, with the inner panel printed in a gray background with the letters in white—effective and not usual.

A New "Green Mansions"

W. H. Hudson's masterpiece has been given a setting which is hardly likely to be bettered in this new edition published by the Limited Editions Club. In many respects it is the sort of book which is seldom attempted by American publishers, partly perhaps because of the expense—but more likely, I believe, because of a lack of imagination.

It is in format a large, tall octavo, rather thin than thick: on the whole a good book to handle. The text has been set in "Centaur" type, that graceful example of Mr. Rogers's skill as a type designer, well leaded and delicately—perhaps a bit too delicately—printed. Great distinction is given to it by Mr. Wilson's pictures in color. It may be objected that lithographed color pictures are not in the true tradition of a type printed book, but they are good pictures, well printed, and fit into the scheme of the book extraordinarily well, perhaps just because of that delicacy of the type printing to which I have just taken mild exception. They are not so much illustrations for the scenes of the story as decorative panels by a man who apparently knows the jungle. In short the book, while it violates one of the precepts of a well-knit whole, achieves success by the delicacy and skill of the component parts. It is one of the choicest of recent issues from the Limited Editions Club.

Noble Numbers

From the Oxford University Press comes the first issue in a new series, The Hesperides Series, being "The Poems of Robert Herrick" in two volumes. The second issue will be Mrs. Gaskell's "Cranford." The volumes have been designed by Mr. Bruce Rogers and printed at the Oxford University Press, and are good value at $2.50 per volume.

In shape the volumes are small octavo, with that suitability of proportions which is difficult to achieve but pleasant to contemplate. The binding is a smooth brown cloth, with gilt tops, and a sprinkling of Hesperidean apples. The problem of a small page and small type is never too easy to solve: in this case the type is the round, full Baskerville, making for a good looking as well as an easy reading page. The volumes are disarmingly simple and straightforward in appearance, reminding one of those charming books of the nineties or of some of the Pickering volumes, but with a bit more of sophistication.

Letters of Western Authors

The Book Club of California, which last year sent out to its members a series of views of California mining towns, is this year issuing a series of "Letters of Western Authors," each with a descriptive text by a contemporary Western writer. So far letters from George Sterling and Bret Harte have been printed in facsimile, with descriptive comment printed on the enclosing folder. These very agreeable souvenirs will be treasured by their recipients.

John Donne

The Peter Pauper Press has just published in its series of two dollar books "The Love Poems of John Donne," as a somewhat extravagantly tall octavo. But, as I have said before, these Peter Pauper Press books are worth having, and this seems to me to be the best of the series except for the first—the Constitution of the United States.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
THE SMILING CORPSE *A Coupla Guys* (Farrar and Rinehart: $2.)	Death of critic in N. Y. apt. solved by harness bull while literati and mystery sharks cavort gaily.	Besides being capital take-off on methods of major mystery mongers it is also a grand yarn.	Handsome spoofing
THE MAN IN BUTTON BOOTS *Anthony Gilbert* (Holt: $2.)	Murder of millionaire with huge diamond pits Latymer (English) and Dupuy (French) against each other with amazing result.	Slow motion all the way through, but story is engrossing, Monte Carlo background lively, and end a gasp.	It'll hold you
DEATH OF AN AIRMAN *C. St. John Sprigg* (Crime Club: $2.)	Expert pilot's unexplainable crash reveals murder and dope-running plot which keep two 'tecs jumping.	Fascination of aviation stuff (extra well done) takes curse off an ending which is way up in stratosphere.	Extra-readable
THE RIDDLE OF THE FLORENTINE FOLIO *E. S. Liddon* (Crime Club: $2.)	Deaths of rich Southern spinster, aged negress, and young scapegrace deftly solved by fluffy female detective.	Gathers momentum slowly, but entrance of voodoo motif and slam-bang finale make up for lost time.	Middlin'
PROFILE OF A MURDER *Rufus King* (Harcourt, Brace: $2.)	Strangling of wealthy woman at Andirondack estate brings Lieut. Valcour hot-foot.	Designedly transparent as mystery but suspense keeps up to concert pitch all the way.	Good

NEWS FROM THE SOUTH

In the eyes of many critics the South has held primacy in American letters during the decade 1925-1935.

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MISTER MCGREGOR, by Andrew Nelson Lytle

OLD CATAWBA, by Thomas Wolfe

OLD WINE IN A NEW BOTTLE, by John Donald Wade

POETRY, by Elizabeth Madox Roberts, Allen Tate, Lawrence Lee, Lizette Woodworth Reese, John Peale Bishop, Ben Belitt, Kathryn Worth

ENCAUSTICS FOR SOUTHERNERS, by Stark Young

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WRITER, young woman, interested in the arts, with funds rather low but cheerfulness and resourcefulness unimpaired, wants summer shack near bathing water in congenial neighborhood. Box 320-A.

A SMALL state college was abolished. I was head of English Department. Man, 35, sound health and character, practising law and other experiences. Above average ability going to waste at present clerical job. Teaching, editorial work, or what have you? Inquiry invited. Box 321-A.

BACHELOR, 39, "holocaustically craving"—to all the ladies and gentlemen, who sent him these lovely 53 letters and to those, to whom he could not reply yet,—but he will!—most grateful and cordial greetings, and a toast! Dearest friends—long live Romance and blessed be the Review! Box 276-A.

WRITER economic and social developments wishes visiting contact with woman 30 to 40, preferably college or newspaper trained. Attractive appearance necessary, but objective is intellectual exchange in social visiting. Give experience, name matters most interested. Address Box 322-A.

HOUSE wanted by writer, prepared to buy small home with modern conveniences for cash if bargain offers, in small community offering literary and artistic associates, within 300 miles of New York City, preferably in New England. Box 323-A.

EXPERIENCED theatrical director offers his services for summer stock company in East. Best professional references. Box 324A.

CONSCIENTIOUS couple, artist, pianist, seeks small apartment Manhattan reasonable or exchange for tutoring. Box 325-A.

EDUCATED young couple as companions for elderly couple this summer. Small salary plus expenses. Box 326-A.

YOUNG woman, cultured American with diversified interests and occupied in literary pursuit, desires to correspond with congenial and interesting young man. Box 327-A.

YOUNG woman of Jewish faith is interested in corresponding with young man in Philadelphia or New York. Good Correspondent.

EXPERT offers Hebrew lesson for lesson in English phonetics. Jordan.

SOMEWHERE there must be hiding an attractive, unattached gentleman "around fifty," college bred, Protestant, open-minded, with people his first love; books, running brooks, travel, theatre his second loves, who would enjoy written conversation with a versatile woman and an awfully good letter-writer. Wisconsin-ite.

FOR SALE:—7-room house in Woodstock, Vermont, for summer home or all-year round living; all modern conveniences. Bargain for quick sale. Address J. H.

Double-Crostics: Number 53

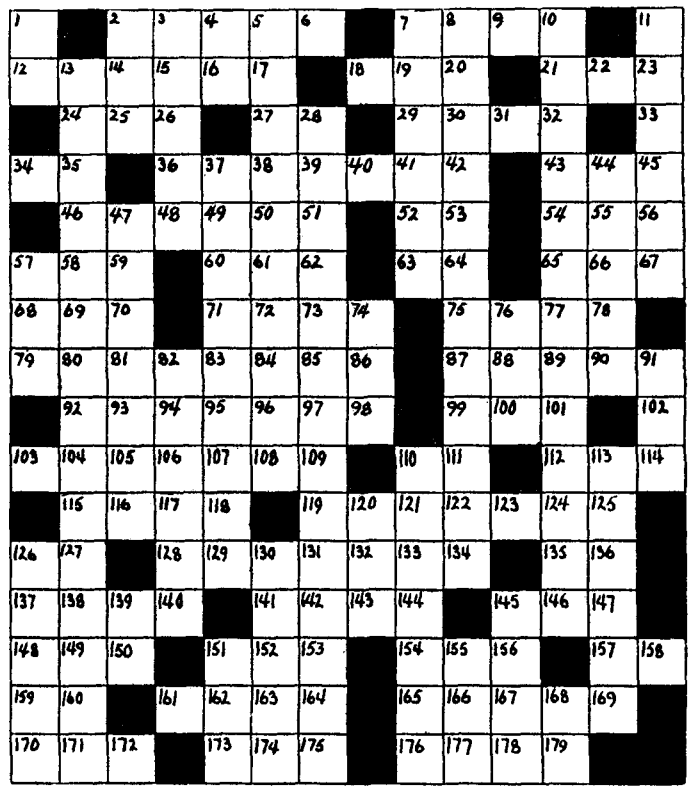
By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess thirty words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered (these numbers appear at the beginning of each definition) and you are thereby able to tell how many letters are in the required word. When you have guessed a word each letter is to be written in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

Either before (preferably) or after placing the letters in their squares you should write the words you have guessed on the blank lines which appear to the right in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter. The initial letters of this list of words spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Unless otherwise indicated, the author is English or American.

DEFINITIONS	WORDS
I. 137-9-78-19-62-114. Fuss, confusion.	_ _ _ _ _ _
II. 61-101-173-14-147. Character in "Adam Bede."	_ _ _ _ _
III. 110-168-121-105-84. Site of the topless towers.	_ _ _ _ _
IV. 37-103-134-126-1-156-54. Kind of pottage Jacob gave Esau.	_ _ _ _ _ _ _
V. 167-66-89-124-140-145-108. Dip, plunge into.	_ _ _ _ _ _ _
VI. 117-18-136-36-12-144. Symbol of immortality.	_ _ _ _ _ _
VII. 60-35-151-141-118-3-96-104. Last utterance.	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
VIII. 22-119-106-138-82. Book by Dostoievsky.	_ _ _ _ _
IX. 59-175-45. Condensed moisture.	_ _ _
X. 123-139-38-7. Corner, secluded retreat.	_ _ _ _
XI. 16-155-127-174-48-143. Hebrew God.	_ _ _ _ _ _
XII. 98-63-178. Hebrew for day in Feast days.	_ _ _
XIII. 77-125-92-4-64-52-17. One who earnestly entreats.	_ _ _ _ _ _ _
XIV. 99-10-146-23-164-149-120-153. Surrounded with wrappings.	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
XV. 73-162-129-51-28-172. Cheap and gaudy.	_ _ _ _ _
XVI. 95-13-33-177-81-100. Something badly made over.	_ _ _ _ _ _
XVII. 44-135-152-163-102-94-24-Passenger vehicle.	_ _ _ _ _ _ _
XVIII. 79-112-90-46. Exclamation of disgust.	_ _ _ _
XIX. 15-30-2-57-142-71. Loud laugh.	_ _ _ _ _ _
XX. 131-5-116-171. Pseudonym of English essayist.	_ _ _ _
XXI. 169-83-32-50-53-41-91-176-69-128. Similarities.	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
XXII. 154-159-67-122-40-166-97-21. Came to rest.	_ _ _ _ _ _ _
XXIII. 8-93-39-130. Bird-call; memorandum.	_ _ _ _
XXIV. 6-148-170-43. Euphemism for "damn."	_ _ _ _
XXV. 65-29-179-85-49-88-113. Sweetheart. (colloq.)	_ _ _ _ _ _ _
XXVI. 132-75-34-111-27-160-42. Doubly.	_ _ _ _ _ _ _
XXVII. 20-70-56-158-109. Bordered.	_ _ _ _ _
XXVIII. 150-72-87-26-68-55-161-76. Somewhat small.	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
XXIX. 31-47-11-115-133-165-86. Illegal.	_ _ _ _ _ _ _
XXX. 80-157-74-25-107-58. For a short time.	_ _ _ _ _ _



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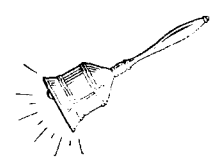

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The PHŒNIX NEST

By WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

FIRST I must thank *W. B. Greene* of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia for telling me the name I was trying to remember of the small plush animal, very jolly, and found only in Australia. When full-grown it weighs about eighteen pounds, and is commonly called a bear, although it is not related to the true bears of Eurasia or America. In other words, it's the Koala, and one *Noel Burnet* of Sydney, has written a whole pamphlet about "The Blue Gum Family at Koala Park," which is out there near Sydney, at Castle Hill Road and West Pennant Hills. The Koala looks very much like a child's teddy-bear, but has a black, rubbery nose. Full-face it really resembles *Alexander Woollcott.* Its dietary requirements are as simple as they are extraordinary. From unpalatable and indigestible Eucalyptus leaves to dirt. It's a connoisseur of gum leaves. I got acquainted with eucalyptus trees in California, but I've never seen a Koala in the flesh. But don't send me one, because I wouldn't know how to keep it alive! . . . Last Tuesday was the Sixtieth Birthday of *Robert Frost.* Please turn to Robert's poem in this issue. It was read aloud on Sunday last by your humble servant, in the *Saturday Review's* broadcast on the "Fireside Hour." I hope you didn't notice I'd just had a bad cold, probably due to there being no fireside in my apartment—or at least a side, but no fire! . . . Mr. Leach's *Forum* has started "A Page for Poets" in the April issue. *Henry Goddard Leach* is now President of the Poetry Society of America. . . . *Louis Untermeyer* is in receipt of an even more extraordinary request than the last one he sent me. I have, off and on, been waging war against those teachers who instruct their pupils to bother busy men with requests for whole autobiographies, special poems written out by hand, etc., etc. The latest gem Louis has received is from an innocent child in Elkhorn, Wisconsin. All this babe wants to know is all about Louis's ancestry, what his children do, all his experiences in travel abroad, his favorite dish, flower, and color, enough information about his marriages so the child can talk about him for twenty minutes, the explanation to the child of the author's marriages, and in fact that which, as Louis says, would amount to a 20,000 word biography, with all the intimate and "hitherto unpublished details." Also, the author was asked to write the babe a special poem, on the spot! . . . Now I am not at all blaming the child. So long as idiotic teachers instruct their pupils to write such letters, so long will they come to the weary authors. In the case of Mr. Untermeyer, and of many others, there are plenty of books in which his career is sufficiently given, and his own books are in all the public libraries. Also, in any public library it is possible to trace down the magazine articles, etc., that have been written about any given writer. And do the idiotic teachers suppose that if a writer wished to give the public an autobiography he would not prepare it? Why should they expect utter strangers to be suddenly taken into his confidence concerning the most intimate details of his life? I shall continue from time to time to call attention to this pestiferous practice. In some respects American audiences are the most half-witted of those in any country. Our picture "fans," for instance, are simply incredible! So are those school-teachers who urge their scholars to intrude upon the valuable time of writers trying to get a little actual work done before the great and final twilight! Why don't they write a few bank presidents, and have them send samples of all the bills they have in their banks, in all the various denominations? . . . *B. F. Holtzer* of 1 Dash Place, Riverdale, New York, wishes me to announce that "anyone interested in having poetry, hitherto unprinted, included in an anthology for unrecognized poets may communicate" with her at that address. . . . I am glad to say that the San José Fine Arts Association Board of Adjudication in Literature has awarded its Annual Certificate of Recognition to *Charles Erskine Scott Wood,* author of "Heavenly Discourse" and "The Poet in the Desert." . . . I hear that *Margot Sanger* is a very gifted artist in the field where reigns *Ruth Draper,* and where *Cornelia Otis Skinner* and *Angna Enters* have distinguished themselves. She is *not* to be confused with *Margaret Sanger!* I haven't heard her yet, but I hope to. . . . A lady called *Gretna Green* sends me some triolets, and the one I like best I think should be regarded as significant by all young writers. If your hands actually *do* slip out and you can't help it, then maybe you're going to be a writer. Otherwise not.

I sat on my hands
To keep them from writing.
Oh my Goodness, my Lands!
I sat on my hands;
Not a soul understands
This thing I am fighting.
I sat on my hands
To keep them from writing.

. . . *John O'London's Weekly* has printed several condensations of "Gray's Elegy." The one that I have taken to my heart forever runs as follows:

Dusk tolls,
Herds flee,
Hinds scoot;
Not me.

. . . And yet I take this occasion to!

Trade Winds

By P. E. G. QUERCUS

☞The 40th anniversary dinner of the New York Booksellers' League, held at the Aldine Club March 20, was a delightful occasion, celebrating also 40 years in the book business on the part of Mr. Fred Melcher, the much admired editor of the *Publishers' Weekly.* ☞Mr. W. R. Barnes of Barnes and Noble presided and gracefully introduced the speakers. ☞Mr. John Macrae, president of Dutton's, gave cheerful reminiscence of his 50 years with that distinguished house. ☞Ernest Dressel North recalled that when he joined Scribner's in 1876 the office boy there was Frank Doubleday; Mr. North remembers R. L. Stevenson coming into the Scribner's office. ☞W. W. Norton delighted the gathering by quoting an early reference to booksellers' troubles, which he had found in the great Oxford Dictionary: in 1615 a bookseller was dissected and they found "his heart half rotted away." ☞Mr. Norton, his table companions learned, is a passionate lover of cheese (actual, not literary) and blasphemes modern soap-syntheses that large factories emit under that name. ☞Mr. Ted McCawley, president of the American Booksellers' Association, was puzzled about trade problems but still hopeful. ☞Mr. Morley suggested that even if commercial codes and arrangements collapse the impassioned lunacy of booksellers would surmount the world's apathy. ☞Mr. Melcher recalled bookselling conditions of the '90's, when the League began, and his own first job at Lauriat's in Boston, at a salary of $4 a week. ☞We should greatly enjoy seeing Fred Melcher put down on paper his recollections of his lower-case days. ☞Veteran Mr. Theodore Metz, 87 years old, led the large meeting in oldtime songs, and John Mulholland exercised his incredible prestidigits afterward for a lingering group of admirers. ☞Mr. Mulholland, by the way, has a new book on Magic forthcoming in April, which the trade should welcome. ☞Frank X. Howard of Dutton's was nominated by Ralph Wilson as the League's new president, and elected by acclamation. ☞Mr. Bob Sherwood, one of the past presidents, the only bookseller who began life as a circus clown, was in sparkling form. Much praise was given to the souvenir program-album prepared by Mr. McKeachie and Mr. Crone. One of its humorous features was a picture of a gravestone inscribed *Rest in Peace* with the query "WHAT HAS BECOME OF—?" listing various schemes of Book-Utopia that have gone quietly to ground in recent years.

☞Quercus was happy to hear from Mr. John Macrae of the good success of *Fifty Years a Surgeon,* a book of memoirs by the well-loved Dr. Robert T. Morris whom we have so long admired—and whose *Microbes and Men, Doctors versus Folks* and *A Surgeon's Philosophy* said many startling things long before it was fashionable to do so. ☞One of the pleasantest places to eat and drink that Q. has discovered lately is the Falstaff Room of the Biltmore Hotel in Providence, R. I. with its lively mural (by Robert Haun) of the Boar's Head Tavern and four-foot logs burning on the hearth. ☞Travelling Shakespeareans will enjoy hunting it out.

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